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TERRORISM IN BARCELONA AND ITS IMPACT ON SPANISH POLITICS 1904-1909 *

I

THE TERRORIST TRADITION

IT WAS IN THE 1890'S THAT BARCELONA EARNED THE REPUTATION OF being a violent city. After some rather inoffensive explosive devices, which caused little alarm, came three major bomb outrages perpetrated by anarchist terrorists.

On 24 September 1893, the Captain General of Catalonia, General Arsenio Martínez Campos, took the salute at a military parade. The bomb that was flung at him did not reach its mark, and he was only slightly injured; but it killed two others and wounded twelve soldiers and bystanders. The assassin, Paulino Pallás, was arrested, court-martialled and executed. Before he died, he warned that he would be avenged. His prediction was all too soon fulfilled.

On 7 November 1893, a bomb was thrown into the stalls of the Barcelona Opera House from the gallery above. The toll was twenty dead and scores of wounded. After a long and hectic manhunt, the terrorist was found: Santiago Salvador, a peaceable anarchist artisan, a family man, father of two daughters. He was swiftly tried and executed.

On 7 June 1895, yet another bomb exploded in Barcelona, scattering the crowds taking part in the Corpus Christi procession. This time the casualties were twelve dead and forty-four wounded. The terrorist escaped.

The newly-formed Social Brigade, which had been charged with the

* The reader will perhaps remark on the uneven quality of the source materials used for this article. This is due to the fact that most of the relevant documents in Madrid (Dirección General de Seguridad), Barcelona (Jefatura Superior de Policía) and London (Scotland Yard, *re* foreign anarchists resident in London at the time) have been destroyed because of lack of storage space. The only police archives still intact are those of Paris (*Archives Nationales* and *Préfecture de Police*, which include, among other things, the extremely important reports made by M. Bonnacarrère, special *commissaire* of the French police in Barcelona. I have not been able to find the relevant Spanish judiciary files, and though one cannot be certain, it would seem that they have suffered a fate similar to that of the police files. As can be seen below, the loss of these archives has reduced the hard evidence on the subject to mere fragments. This is why I have frequently felt obliged to emphasize small details, since only these can give the picture some consistency. I would like to thank Raymond Carr and James Joll for their helpful suggestions, as well as E. Prat de la Riba, R. La Cierva, J. Arrarás and the Marquess of Santo Floro for giving me access to their private papers.

persecution of anarchists, had no idea as to who might have thrown the Corpus Christi bomb. But the exasperated public demanded results. Encouraged by the Public Prosecutor to "close their eyes to reason", the police launched an all-out campaign of indiscriminate arrests, torture and harassment. The law became an instrument of oppression.

Before long this state of affairs sparked off an international outcry against "Inquisitorial Spain", led by French socialists and radicals, English protestants, and anarchists and freemasons throughout Europe. Partly as a result of this campaign and of pressure put on the government from within Spain itself, the final toll of death sentences was limited to five. But it is almost certain that of the five anarchists condemned to death, none was responsible for the Corpus Christi bomb — though they may have been involved in other acts of terrorism.¹

The "Montjuich repression" — so named after the fortress towering over Barcelona harbour, where the prisoners were held, tortured and tried, and where the executions took place — deserves our attention. From the historical point of view, it consists of no more than a horrific sequence of commonplace facts. Its direct consequences were few or are difficult to isolate: the unbridled ferocity of the police at this time so terrified working-class militants, that it can be held responsible for the atmosphere of political inertia and distrust which the Republican

¹ The literature on the outrage of 7 June 1895 is abundant and confused. The anarchists have always denied responsibility, see: T. Claramunt, in *El Productor* (Anarchist, Barcelona), 13 July 1901; P. Vallina, *Crónica de un revolucionario* (Paris, 1958); R. Sempau, *Los victimarios* (Barcelona, 1901), pp. 152-3. Many anarchist sources allege police provocation, since the bomb was thrown among the common people in the procession rather than at the military and civilian authorities in front: see Tarrida del Marmol, *Les inquisiteurs en Espagne* (Paris, 1897); Mas Gomeri, in *El Productor*, 16 Oct. 1905; García Viña, letter to Nettlau, Melilla, 24 Sept. 1928 (Nettlau Papers, I.I.S.G., Amsterdam). Historians generally hold the anarchists responsible, but rarely go into details: see G. Brenan, *Spanish Labyrinth*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 164-5; E. Jardí, *La ciutat de les bombes* (Barcelona, 1964), p. 36; G. Nuñez de Prado, *Los dramas del anarquismo* (Barcelona-B. Aires, 1904), pp. 135-7. The most likely account seems to be that by L. Bonafoux: the bomb was thrown by a French anarchist called Girault, who escaped to Buenos Aires via London. Bonafoux, without doubt the best Spanish revolutionary journalist at the turn of the century and usually extremely well informed, gave his source as the Italian anarchist Mataini, at whose London home Girault had lived in hiding before going to Argentina. Bonafoux's article was published in *El Heraldo* (Independent, Madrid) and reproduced in *La Publicidad* (Republican, Barcelona) 21 June 1901, evening edition. His version tallies exactly with all the details given by the two most distinguished anarchist intellectuals of the time, Ricardo Mella and José Prat, both opponents of terrorism, in their book *La barbarie gubernamental en España* (Brooklyn, 1897), though they did not give the name of the person involved. Their account helps us to decode Sempau's *roman à clef*: *Los victimarios* (Barcelona, 1901).

Party was to exploit in 1901. Even the Catalan middle class was not immune from fear, after the notorious Corominas case. Pedro Corominas was a promising young Catalan lawyer with anarchist leanings of a purely intellectual kind. He, too, was imprisoned and tortured and owed his life, it would appear, exclusively to the intervention of his friends — among them Miguel de Unamuno and Joaquín Costa — who campaigned on his behalf. In the eyes of the Catalan middle-class, this was dramatic confirmation of their conviction that a wide gulf separated the state from the country or, in the nationalist jargon, that Madrid was cut off from Catalonia.

Another direct consequence of the Montjuich affair was the assassination on 7 August 1897, of the then Prime Minister, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, the political architect of the Restoration. He was shot by an Italian anarchist, Michele Angiolillo, who declared in the course of his trial that he had killed Cánovas in order to avenge the sufferings of those who had been tortured in the fortress of Montjuich.²

But the most significant factor of the Montjuich repression lies perhaps elsewhere. For the excesses committed by the police did not occur simply because the men in charge of the investigation happened to be heartless and brutal. The Spanish Administration was top-heavy, cumbersome, undisciplined and often corrupt. Scrupulous civil servants had only their conscience to restrain them from abuses. The legislation regarding civil service responsibilities was confused and rarely applied, and no efficient control mechanisms existed. Under these circumstances, with the police force as badly paid as most other lower grade civil servants, its recruitment totally haphazard and providing no security of tenure, scrupulousness could hardly be expected. But the conditions which in other branches of the civil service gave rise to bribery and tiresome delays, resulted in the police

² Spanish historians suggest that Angiolillo was paid by the Cuban rebels. See e.g. M. Fernández Almagro, *Historia política de la España contemporánea* (Madrid, 1959), ii, pp. 416-19. The anarchist writer F. Urales (Juan Montseny) states that Angiolillo received 500 francs from the Cuban revolutionary Dr. Betanzos and 500 francs from a "famous French journalist" who was still alive in 1905 (H. Rochefort?); *La Publicidad*, 16 Oct. 1905. All this may well be true. Nonetheless it is likely that the original plot, if plot there was, was hatched in Barcelona. Michele Angiolillo, born 1870 in Foggia, settled in Barcelona in 1895 under the name of Joseph Santo, as a type-setter and there lived through the turbulent period of the Montjuich repression. On 13 March 1896 he disappeared from Barcelona, returning on 28 March: *Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, Paris, B.a/1511. Anyhow, there is no doubt about Angiolillo's anarchist beliefs, and it is also established that he was assisted by anarchist friends right up to his final trip to Spain: letter to Hintze-Ribeiro, Prime Minister of Portugal, from his most devoted agent, Paris, 30 August 1904 (translated copy), *Min. As. Ext.*, Madrid, no. 2751.

harassing individuals and making unwarranted arrests; arbitrariness was accentuated by a lack of self-assurance bred of inefficiency. Thus a few weeks of police excesses did more to bring the whole state into disrepute than many years of maladministration; a scandal of huge proportions was caused, and the campaign against the repression persisted well into the year 1900, when the Montjuich prisoners were finally pardoned. The lesson that many in Spain were taught by the Montjuich affair was plain and simple: without some kind of democratic control of the executive, the liberalism of the constitution was a dead letter. If there was any conclusion to be drawn by the politicians, it was surely that a deficient and ill-controlled police force could create very serious problems.

Though the repression damaged Cánovas's prestige, it did succeed in practically putting an end to terrorism in Barcelona. Many of the anarchists committed to violence fled the country, and the intellectuals of the movement, together with those militants who believed that the workers must be converted to united action through spoken and written propaganda, regained control of what had never been a numerically strong rank and file. There were no more major outrages in Barcelona and tempers cooled. The only serious incident in the period up to 1900 was the attempt by Ramón Sempau, a young journalist with anarchist ideas, to kill Lieutenant Portas, known as "the Spanish Trepov", who had been personally responsible for the torture of the Montjuich prisoners. He failed to kill Portas and — like Vera Zasulich who tried to kill Trepov himself — Sempau was acquitted first by public opinion and then by the jury.

By 1900, then, it looked as though "propaganda by the deed" was a thing of the past. When the suspension of constitutional guarantees was set aside after the end of the Spanish-American War, the anarchists were able once again to form associations and to propagate their ideas in their renascent press and at political meetings. Violence and revolution were as important an ingredient of their preachings as ever, but the emphasis was on collective action — on the General Strike. "Propaganda by the deed" had cost them the sympathy of the workers, said the anarchist leaders, and that should not be allowed to happen again.³

At the same time, the nature of Catalan urban politics was changing radically. The years following 1899 had seen a swiftly advancing process of political mobilization. Electoral participation figures speak for themselves: only 400 to 1,000 people voted in the 1899 general

³ Mella and Prat, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

elections;⁴ in the 1901 general elections some 14,000 votes were cast, and in 1903 nearly 50,000 (37.7 per cent) of the electorate. Of these, some 20,000 were working-class (male) votes given to the Republican Party, which was now making considerable progress under the local leadership of a rising demagogue of considerable ability and former campaigner against the Montjuich tortures — Alejandro Lerroux. In direct competition with the Republican Party and with a strong appeal to the local bourgeoisie, the Regionalist Party was likewise becoming increasingly strong and organized. Political tension was running high, but it was channelled into frantic electoral activity and intense intra-party militancy. In fact, the municipal elections of 8 November 1903 were the first elections for many years in Barcelona in which not a single case of violent action was reported.⁵

Until 1903, those anarchists whom the police in Barcelona considered to be potential terrorists, seemed to lie low, and all the alarms emanated from abroad, where the terrorists were in exile. A man called Alfonso García Mata arrived in Spain from Buenos Aires in November 1902. He was 25 years of age, an Argentine citizen of Spanish parents, a shop attendant who, having come to assassinate the king, gave up this mission because of lack of co-operation from his Galician comrades. And the Spanish government kept a close watch on the town of Paterson, U.S.A., from where Bresci, the assassin of Umberto I of Italy, had come in 1900 and which sheltered an Italian colony, predominantly anarchist, apparently under the direction of Malatesta (— or, in his absence, of the anarchist Pedro Esteve, who had left Barcelona in 1896 after the Corpus Christi bomb). In Paris, Marseilles, Perpignan, and London, where many terrorists had taken refuge, there was intermittent agitation. All, however, remained words and there was no action.⁶

⁴ As usual, the official figures are higher. According to the *Diario de Barcelona* (Conservative), no deputy received more than 400 votes (7 Apr. 1899). *La Vanguardia* (Conservative) claimed that no more than 500 had cast their vote (18 Apr. 1899).

⁵ *La Publicidad*, 21 Oct. 1903.

⁶ Active anarchists in Barcelona, under the leadership of an Italian travelling salesman named Mariano Paoli, who was a friend of Malatesta: confidential note of the Ministry of the Interior, 20 March 1901, *Min. As. Ext.*, No. 2758 (Paoli's file); for the Buenos-Aires plot of 1902, see confession and police report of Orense, 26 Nov. 1902: *ibid.* (file of A. Pérez Pulgar). On the Paterson group, see despatch from the Spanish Representative in the U.S., Washington, 5 Aug. 1900, *ibid.* (file of Tarrida del Marmol); for other plots see *Min. As. Extr.* No. 2751 (file of Juan Constans — on J. B. Oller for 1901); *id.*, No. 2756 (file of Ramón Homedes, for 1903); *id.*, No. 2759 (file of Tarrida del Marmol, for 1902). It will be noted that these and other files from the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs are not police files, but only heterogeneous files containing consular and ambassadorial information on Spanish revolutionaries abroad.

In 1903 the police in Barcelona found some dynamite cartouches, and a bomb went off at the house of Police Inspector Tressols; there were no casualties.⁷ These scattered incidents caused little alarm. But in 1904, terrorism suddenly made a come-back in Barcelona, though it had been disavowed in every single sector of the political spectrum. It was to last well into 1909, die down slowly and all but vanish again for years. When violence returned much later under completely altered circumstances, it was to take a different form.⁸

II

THE "TYRANNICIDES"

Three attempts at "tyrannicide" were made in 1904, 1905 and 1906, though only one in Barcelona itself. This involved Antonio Maura, Conservative Prime Minister since December 1903, who decided that the king should visit Barcelona in April 1904. No Spanish monarch had dared to visit the Catalan capital since 1888 for fear of terrorism and hostile demonstrations. Maura insisted that the king had to assert himself and travel freely throughout all the territories of his realm. The Barcelona republicans warned that the royal visit would probably be a failure and was in any case a "reckless adventure".⁹ They did not, however, call for violence. Instead, Lerroux made one of his characteristic suggestions: he called upon the poor, the paralysed and the beggars to line the streets in their shabbiest rags — "Let them approach, let them see [the king] at close range and observe how the monster of history has the face of a child and questioning eyes".¹⁰ The anarchists thought it wisest to lie low.¹¹

The king arrived in Barcelona on 6 April 1904. His reception was

⁷ On 1 Aug. 1903, the police found a cartouche of dynamite while searching a builder during a strike; 19 Aug., a bomb was found; 18 Oct., attempt against Tressols; 5 Nov., the discovery of three fire-crackers in the rooms of an anarchist: Memoranda on the attempts in Barcelona, Romanones papers (private, Madrid), xii, 14. It appears that the bomb against Tressols was placed by a rival policeman, who wanted to have his post: E. Iglesias, *El Progreso*, 24 May 1900.

⁸ In 1910 only one bomb exploded in Barcelona, and none in the years 1911-15. M. Sastre, *La esclavitud moderna* (Barcelona, 1921), p. 195. The assassination of Prime Minister Canalejas in 1912 seems to have had nothing to do with Barcelona anarchists.

⁹ E. Junoy, in *La Publicidad*, 29 Mar. 1904.

¹⁰ *La Publicidad*, 4 Apr. 1904.

¹¹ Apparently the Governor paid money to several anarchists, L. Bonafulla among them, to keep them quiet during the royal visit: González Rothwoss (Governor of Barcelona) to Maura, 23 Mar. 1904 (Maura papers, uncatalogued, private archive, Madrid). Bonafulla was a much-trusted leader at that time. He was venal: Felipe Pozzi to J. La Cierva, Seville, 2 July 1907 (La Cierva papers, uncatalogued, private, Murcia).

a success, unqualified by the discovery of a minor explosive device in a street far from the royal route through the city. Everything went smoothly and according to plan. But on 12 April, the last day of the king's visit, just as he was leaving the Cathedral after a *Te Deum* of Thanksgiving for a flawless week, Antonio Maura was seriously wounded by the knife of a young anarchist stonemason, to the cry of "Long live Anarchy!"

Joaquín Artal, aged 19, was a gentle, lonely and shy young man, not unlike Léon-Jules Léauthier or Santo Jerónimo Caserio. Orphaned at an early age, he had grown up in a children's home. He had been a devout Catholic but soon lost his faith:

Then, not believing in anything at all . . . it made me so very sad! I heard talk of many who were suffering just as I was, and of some who were suffering more than I for the sins of others; I read Tolstoy, as I had read Balzac, and came to believe in an ideal; I felt myself to be an anarchist.¹²

Artal longed to be an artist, but no one had taken him seriously and he became deeply resentful. His anarchist beliefs had had "no other effect on his decisions than that of showing him what was the action he might take to accomplish his main and indeed only purpose, that of proving that though he was but a poor fellow, he was by no means resigned".¹³

However harsh the invectives against the "hated Maura" in the anarchist press, and though Artal had personal friends in the anarchist centre of Sans (in the industrial suburbs of Barcelona) — especially one Luis Carreras — nothing indicates that the attempted murder was the result of a plot — though the Barcelona anarchists no doubt thought it a good idea. They were perhaps behind another unsuccessful attempt on Maura's life on 26 April, this time in Alicante. Those responsible were never traced.¹⁴

¹² *La Publicidad*, 10 June 1904, evening edition. For Tolstoy's influence on Artal, see M. Bonnacarrère, 14 Apr. 1904, *Arch. Nat.*, Paris, F¹12725.

¹³ A. Hurtado, in *La Publicidad*, 10 June 1904. Hurtado was Artal's lawyer and the only person who knew him well to have written about him.

¹⁴ For the invectives, see *El Productor*, 9 Apr. 1904. "Spanish anarchists hate Maura more than they do the king himself", wrote R. Hintze-Ribeiro's informer, Madrid, 18 July 1904: *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2751. For Artal and Carreras, see Bonnacarrère, 12 Apr. 1904, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725. Bonnacarrère reported that his informers had heard of a second attempt on Maura's life being planned: *ibid.*, 13 Apr. 1904. A few days later, the Editor of *El Productor*, L. Bonafulla, told one of Bonnacarrère's informers: "Maura has got away this time, but I expect we shall get him in Palma or somewhere else" (*ibid.*, 27 Apr. 1904). Constant Leroy (M. V. Moreno) claims that Ferrer and Francisco Miranda persuaded Artal to try and kill Maura. Moreno's book *Los secretos del anarquismo* (Mexico, 1913), contains much that is false, but also much correct information since the author became a close collaborator of Ferrer's. But the details he gives about the failed assassination of 1904 are unconvincing, particularly those implicating the old fighter, A. Lorenzo, in the plot and the selection of the victim.

Artal was tried and condemned to a long term of imprisonment. It was the first time that any anarchist tried for a serious crime had not been sentenced to death. This may have helped prevent the recurrence of the kind of chain reaction of reprisals that followed the execution of Pallás and culminated in the assassination of Cánovas.¹⁵ In fact, it was not until 1911 that a hot-headed solitary man was once more to try his luck against a public figure of the monarchy. And Manuel Posá, who in that year fired a shot at Maura (he missed), was not an anarchist, but a young radical republican who was himself soon horrified by what he had done.

The two other attempts at "tyrannicide", which took place on 31 May 1905, in Paris, and on 31 May 1906 in Madrid, belong to an entirely different brand of terrorism — what we might call strategic terrorism. Both these acts of violence had been planned in Barcelona and were part of a carefully laid plot, according to which the king's assassination would spark off a revolution. The idea of killing the king was not a new one. It was the doctrine of the propagandist by the deed. The assassination in 1904 of the Russian Minister of the Interior, V. Plehve, increased the prestige of these attempts: "the *mot d'ordre* is the necessity to respond to the act in St. Petersburg by another act in Western Europe", wrote the Portuguese agent to his President in August 1904. The Spanish anarchists in Paris, he assured in September, wish to stop the (planned) trip of Alfonso XIII to Paris, in the same way as the Italian socialists had managed to prevent the return of the Tsar to Rome. In Marseilles, the Spanish anarchists, resident in the Italian and anarchist area of L'Estaque, were also restive. The plot revolved around Francisco Cardenal, "who is said to be a terrible man", an anarchist who had been brought up before the Montjuich trials. Two terrorists, a Spaniard and an Italian, were appointed to assassinate the king, but nothing happened.¹⁶ The reprisals which the anarchists had planned to

¹⁵ Maura took great pains to keep the temperature of public opinion down. "I believe that had the assassination been successful, it would have been difficult to prevent a violent reaction", he told the French ambassador, M. Jules Cambon: Cambon to Delcassé, 30 Apr. 1904, *Quai d'Orsay*, n.s. 10, Espagne. Also, Nuñez de Prado, *Los dramas* . . . , pp. 139-40.

¹⁶ Letters from the Portuguese agent to his Prime Minister, 30 Aug. and 13 Sept. 1904 (Paris). Spanish translation, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2751. For Spanish anarchism in Paris, see also: Gilles, 1 June 1904, PPO, B.a/1511. For Marseilles, Count Torrijos (Spanish consul) to the Civil Governor in Barcelona, Marseilles, 17 Sept. 1904; Torrijos to Rodríguez Sampedro, Marseilles, 15, 22 Sept. 1904, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2751. Cardenal was a castillian "rationalist" teacher, long established in Catalonia: his file, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2755.

carry out against Alfonso XIII because of the imprisonment of the Alcalá del Valle rebels did not take place either.¹⁷

The police precautions, the international network of information on the anarchists, and the expense as well as the *suite d'esprit* which were required by the organization of an attempt on the king's life, proved of a nature sufficient to break the *élan* of those who wished to act only for the sake of propaganda or for reprisals. They could not, however, stop the attempts which were part of a vaster revolutionary plan, and in the preparation of which the ablest anarchist revolutionaries took part.

The revolutionary alliance of Barcelona republicans and anarchist leaders behind the *attentat de la Rue de Rohan* in Paris was the product of an exceedingly complex situation. The Republican Party of Barcelona was still very much a cadre party geared to electoral activities. In 1903, the foremost republican parties had joined forces under the leadership of Nicolás Salmerón, the only surviving President of the First Republic. This unified Republican Party with its nation-wide machine controlled a good many important cities, including Valencia and Barcelona. On paper at least, it was equipped to provide the backbone of an alternative government if ever the opportunity arose. But it was out of the question for the Republic ever to come as the result of an electoral victory, since the rural districts, which sent by far the largest proportion of deputies to Parliament, were firmly in the hands of the monarchist political bosses. Salmerón himself expected the Republic to be established by a bloodless insurrection, with the Army allied to the republican masses. Yet he consistently refused to sponsor any attempt to stage a revolutionary coup, whether or not any of the handful of republican officers were implicated. A committed revolutionary himself, Lerroux who was incensed at the Leader's passivity decided to plot on his own in Barcelona. A head-on confrontation with the army would have been suicidal and there were not enough republican officers for a military coup backed by the masses to be possible. But if the young king were to die, it would be very difficult to replace him and the monarchy would crumble. The actual assassination of Alfonso XIII was to be carried out by the anarchists. The republicans would have to

¹⁷ In the summer of 1903, there was a violent clash between the peasants of Alcalá del Valle (province of Cadiz) and the Civil Guard. Many were imprisoned. In 1904, Alfonso XIII amnestied all except six. "The king acted wisely, because he perhaps prevented an act of *vengeance which was prepared and set*", wrote the Portuguese agent from Barcelona on 24 July 1904. He would know, because his contact in Barcelona was R. Sempau, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2751.

do no more than to prepare, in conjunction with the anarchists, for a coup that would be triggered off by the news of the king's death, and which the army, thrown into disarray by such an event, might not oppose.

Lerroux's first contacts with the anarchists for this purpose seem to date from 1904, when the French police reported that he had promised the anarchists his help in the event of their attempting a coup. Lerroux and his republican associates, wrote a French informer, "make use of the anarchists because the latter are readier than the republicans to sacrifice themselves". The anarchist calculation was also clear: "With the death of the King, there'll be Revolution in Spain".¹⁸

In April 1905, Lerroux sent envoys from Barcelona into the provinces, to all areas in which he could count on the support of some organized group; and he dispatched the republican journalist Ricardo Fuente to Paris so that he could send him news of the assassination as soon as it occurred. At the same time he alerted his friends in the armed forces. Together with his second-in-command, the republican deputy Junoy, Lerroux would lead and master-mind the republican coup from Barcelona.¹⁹

The Barcelona anarchists were equally prepared and ready. Two hundred Orsini bombs paid for by Francisco Ferrer had been hidden in expectation of the news. According to one of the plotters, Tomás Herreros, most anarchist leaders knew what was being prepared and were on the alert: Basons, Sola, N. Casanova, and, of course, Ferrer, among them. In April 1905, the anarchist *Comité de Acción* (M. Arbós and those arrested the following June — see below) published a leaflet inciting to violence. "It is a novel attitude . . . of

¹⁸ For the first contacts, and the quotation on Lerroux, see Anon. report, Paris, 5 June 1905, *Préf. pol.*, B.2/1511. The anarchist comment, from P. Vallina to anon. informer, Paris, 3 May 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513.

¹⁹ Lerroux gives details of republican preparations, but denies actual complicity in the assassination attempt. He claims that in fact he had no knowledge of what was planned and had merely been given a vague hint by the anarchist Salvochea: *Mis memorias* (Madrid, 1963), pp. 449-51. Yet it cannot be doubted that Lerroux and Junoy were parties to the plot. Much later, the anarchist Tomás Herreros gave the Governor of Barcelona, Angel Ossorio, more detailed information about the plot and the rôle of Lerroux as its organizer: A. Ossorio to J. La Cierva (Off. Telegr.), Barcelona, 4 Jan. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid). His statements were confirmed by Juan Rull: Ossorio to La Cierva, Barcelona, 12 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid). For Lerroux's connections with the military, see Lerroux, *Memorias*, 450. Pedro Vallina took an optimistic view of the army's probable reaction, according to a police informer; "D'un correspondant", Paris, 21 Apr. 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513.

the members of the sect", wrote the French Inspector in Barcelona. "Day by day this state of mind is accentuated".²⁰

The actual planning of the assassination, which was to take place in the course of the king's visit to Paris in May, was done in Barcelona. Pedro Vallina went there early in April to make final arrangements.²¹ Vallina, who was to reach the zenith of his career as a political agitator in the years of the Second Republic, was in 1905 a young and muddle-headed medical student, who had been converted to anarchism by the veteran Fermín Salvochea, and who had gone to Paris to escape arrest in Madrid.²² Having returned from his trip to Barcelona, he told a French police informer in Paris on 3 May that some bombs had been prepared for the arrival there of the king of Spain.²³ According to French police records, the empty shells were sent from Barcelona via Cerbère. The parcels had been posted on 19 April and 5 May respectively, by a man calling himself Antonio Prat. The suspect was a young man "aged twenty-six to twenty-eight, tall, very thin, with prominent cheek-bones, a nondescript dark brown beard and a dark brown moustache".²⁴

²⁰ Herreros' testimony, in Ossorio to La Cierva, 4 June 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid). Bonnacarrère, Barcelona, 9 Apr. 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513. Even though Bonnacarrère's informers reported that the Action Committee was preparing the assassination of "a very important European personage" (Barcelona, 13 Mar. 1905, no. 70F, *loc. cit.*), there is no evidence that this group was connected with the organizers of the Rue de Rohan outrage.

²¹ Prefect of Police to Minister of Interior, Report on the activities of Spanish anarchists, Paris, 18 May 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513. Vallina had made contact with the revolutionary republican Nicolás Estévanez and with Lerroux in 1904: Report, Paris, 5 June 1905, *Préf. Pol.*, B.a/1511; Gilles, 1 June 1904, *Préf. Pol.* B.a/894. Vallina had disappeared from Paris in February 1905: telegram from the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs to several embassies, Madrid, 22 Feb. 1905, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2759 (Vallina's file). When in Barcelona, Vallina stayed in Ferrer's house: Letter from *Veritas* to the court hearing Ferrer's case, Paris, 23 June 1906 — this anonymous letter contains much precise information about clandestine anarchist activities, Romanones papers, Madrid, lx, 33.

²² P. Vallina is one of the very few Spanish anarchists of the time to have left us an autobiography: *Crónica* (Paris, 1958). Vallina left Spain because he was one of those implicated in the so-called "Coronation Plot". This plot, in which a group of anarchists had supposedly planned to assassinate the king on 17 May 1902, the day of his coronation, was in fact spun by the chief of the special anti-anarchist police in Madrid, Laureano Díaz. Indeed, as Nuñez de Prado said, "anarchism in Madrid wears white gloves". On this "plot", see Vallina, *ibid.*, pp. 88-93; Nuñez de Prado, *Los dramas*, pp. 45 ff., and the historical novel of Pio Baroja, *Aurora Roja*.

²³ "D'un correspondant", Paris, 3 May 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, 12513.

²⁴ Commissaire Spécial de Cerbère, Cerbère, 5 June 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513.

This young man was none other than Mateo Morral,²⁵ aged 25, who, like Vallina, and like Emile Henry before them, came from a comfortable bourgeois background. He had been a student in Germany, had made the acquaintance of Malatesta in London, and had returned to live with his father, a textile manufacturer, in Sabadell. He was shy and taciturn, a keen shot, and so acutely embarrassed by his name (the word "morrall" being Spanish for "nose-bag"), that he preferred to be called by his mother's name — Roca. The origins of his conversion to anarchism are not known, but his ideas soon got him into trouble with his family. Extremely puritanical,

He disapproved of his sisters' extravagance while the workers were living in squalour that could have been relieved with the money which they spent on luxuries; he went to such extremes on this point, that he tried to make his sister Adelina not only dress simply, but even cut off her hair, in order to eliminate all coqueterie and ostentation.²⁶

Morral had known Ferrer since 1903²⁷ and it is most likely that he had become involved in the plot to kill the king through him.

The person and character of Francisco Ferrer have been the subject of many heated arguments. His execution by a firing squad in October 1909, as "author and chief" of the rebellion that occurred in July of the same year — which he was not — lent weight to the opinion which is now a truism in the literature on this subject: that Ferrer was executed for having propagated modern educational principles. This view, held by all but a small group of extreme right-wing historians in Spain, was solidly based on the unquestionable fact that the evidence put forward by those who believed in his being

²⁵ The autopsy report on Morral in 1906 described him as a "person aged twenty-four to twenty-eight, with dark brown hair, beard, whiskers, tall". *Causa por Regicidio Frustrado, 1906-1909* (Madrid, 1911), ii, pp. 322-3. The customs agent Rosendo Soler, from whose establishment Morral had sent off the bombs, recognized a photograph of him and confirmed that this was the man who had given the name of Antonio Prats; so did three of Soler's employees in the agency: *Causa*, pp. 359-60. Vallina confirmed that Morral sent the bombs for Malato: anonymous report to La Cierva, n.d. (1907), La Cierva Papers, Murcia. From the style and spelling errors, it appears that this report came from José Jerique, who was the trustworthy informer of S. Moret during his second period as Prime Minister, Oct. 1909-Feb. 1910. Jerique had been a revolutionary republican. Natalio Rivas, Moret's private secretary, says that he helped Moret out of gratitude and without charge (undated note, N. Rivas papers, 11-8911, Royal Academy of History, Madrid). However, Jerique did charge Moret for his services (see copy of letter from N. Rivas to Jerique, 3 Jan., 1910, id. 11-8896), and he is also mentioned in the expenses of the secret funds for 1907-9: *gastos reservados* (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

²⁶ Statement made by Ferrer, *Causa*, i, pp. 322, 170; iii, pp. 60-3.

²⁷ *Causa*, i, p. 322.

a terrorist was far from conclusive. However, new material shows that he was the master-mind behind the 1905 and 1906 attempts on the life of Alfonso XIII. Even among anarchists, he was a curious figure. Born in 1859, the son of a reasonably well-off farming family near Barcelona, Ferrer left home at the age of fourteen to escape the religious atmosphere he found stifling, and in protest against the local parish priest's interference in his family's affairs.²⁸ Before long, he was deeply involved in a series of republican conspiracies and emigrated to Paris, where he became secretary to the republican leader in exile, Ruiz Zorrilla. Ideologically, he soon evolved towards anarchism,²⁹ and by 1901 he was publishing an influential anarchist periodical — *La Huelga General* — in Barcelona. He had recently inherited a large sum of money, almost one million francs, from a French lady who had been his disciple in Paris; and this fortune, which Ferrer took good care to augment by applying his keen business sense to the task, made of him the one and only anarchist with money. He spent the money freely in the service of his ideas. Ferrer was extraordinarily single-minded; his only interests were the Revolution and women. Though prone to outbursts of violent temper, he was generally cool, unemotional and cautious — qualities rarely found in anarchists. It was common for many anarchists to seek rather than to avoid trouble. Thus, during Carnival 1907 "the most prominent anarchists" of Barcelona had to be chased away by the police for antagonizing unknown and masked *promeneurs* in the main avenue of the city. Ferrer, on the other hand, always tried to avoid all contacts with the police and all publicity. Apart from his early republican activities, he probably had a clean police record in Spain up to 1905. He had, however, drawn the attention of the French police to himself at an early stage and had been giving false names in hotels since 1902; but though the Préfet of Paris requested permission from the Prime Minister to have him deported in March 1902, Ferrer's criminal record was clean — except for a conviction, in 1888, for rigging the scales in a shop he had at that time. Ferrer's wealth gave him a strong hold over anarchist conspiracies; his cold and calculating mind guaranteed their being carried out. His person became a vital element in the articulation of a plot in which indiscreet though determined anarchists

²⁸ For Ferrer's early years, see Sol Ferrer, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Francisco Ferrer* (Paris, 1962), pp. 47-66.

²⁹ The exact date is not known. The earliest documents relating Ferrer to anarchism are an anonymous letter to the Montmartre police station, 28 Mar. 1894, and another anonymous letter of 9 July 1894, accusing him of having supplied the bombs that exploded in the Barcelona Opera in 1894: *Préf. Pol.* B.a/1075.

had to work together with men like Lerroux, who were disposed to make use of whatever new situation might arise, but who would never carry out the assassination themselves, nor even give orders to that effect. Ferrer was an anarchist of firm philosophical convictions, which never seemed to falter at the thought of terrorism.³⁰

Let us now take a closer look at the preparations for the king's assassination in 1905. On 11 April, Ferrer sent a letter from Barcelona, addressed to a M. Caussanel (husband of Malato's cook) in Paris: "... it has been settled that the official date will be 30 May". On that day, Alfonso XIII was scheduled to arrive in Paris.³¹ A cheque from F. Ferrer was enclosed with the letter and made out to Charles Malato, who received both from Caussanel.³² A few days later, Caussanel received another letter from Barcelona, signed "F", insisting that "it is quite definitely the 30th, since [he] must be in London on 6 June".³³ The final stages of the preparations are known in detail, since the French police followed them step by step. Caussanel received the empty shells and passed them on, via Malato, to Vallina.³⁴ Together with an Oxford graduate by the name of Harvey, who knew some chemistry, Vallina filled the shells with explosive, getting rid of the incriminating utensils as soon as they had finished with them. Another Spanish anarchist, whom the police identified as a certain "Farrás", was helping Vallina, and the

³⁰ The Carnival episode, in Ossorio to La Cierva, 12 Feb. 1907 (Maura papers). For Ferrer's coldness, see testimonies by his neighbours in Guy André (report), Paris, 16 Jan. 1897, *Préf. Pol.* B.a/1075; by his long-standing collaborator F. Urales, *Mi vida* (Rev. Blanca, n.d.), iii, pp. 23-39; by one of his mistresses, the anarchist C. Jacquinet, in Bonnacarrère, 9 Jan. 1907 (see also *ibid.*, 14 June 1906) *Arch. Nat.* F⁷12725. Ferrer's police and criminal record, in Rapport, 27 Feb. 1902, *Préf. Pol.*, B.a/1075.

³¹ "Barcelona, 11 avril 1905 — Cher ami Recibicho (sic) — L'Européen et les événements seront à la page 80. — La date officielle est fixée au 30 mai. — Quoi de nouveau actuellement... Quelle impression avez-vous de l'état de choses actuel? Je vous embrasse (Signature illisible) Directeur de la Escuela Moderna". Report from 3rd Brigade, Paris, 25 Apr. 1905, *Préf. Pol.*, B.a/1075.

³² "Crédit Lyonnais — cheque No. 171. Paris, 13 avril 1905, Frs. 150. — Payez à l'ordre de M. Malato, la somme de cent cinquante francs. (signed) F. Ferrer". *Préf. Pol.*, *loc. cit.*

³³ "18.IV.1905. — Mon cher ami, — Ne croyez rien aux dates 6.15. C'est bien arrêté le 30, puisque 6 juin doit être à Londres, et j'ai toutes sortes d'autres preuves. — Je ferai insérer dans *La Publicidad* d'ici extraits de votre presse au même sujet. — Vous m'enverrez quelques exemplaires d'm l e y n t f t m n i p, quand vous l'aurez. — A vous. — F.". Le préfet de police to the Minister of the Interior, Paris, 18 May 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513. Alfonso XIII arrived in Paris on 30 May, and left on a State visit to London on 5 June.

³⁴ This was corroborated by Vallina to La Cierva's informer (Jerique?) in 1907: La Cierva papers, Murcia. The quality of the bombshells was fundamental for this strategic terrorism. On the other hand, it was not so for the other terrorism, more concerned with the glory of the terrorist or the noise of the bombs than with their effectiveness.

two of them hid the bombs in the parks of Paris.³⁵ Aware that they were being watched by the police, it seems that the conspirators had thought of exploding the bombs somewhere along the king's route from the Spanish frontier to Paris,³⁶ but for some reason they decided against this. On 25 May, the French police arrested Vallina, Harvey, Malato and Caussanel. "There is nothing more to fear", wrote a police informer.³⁷ And yet, on 31 May in the evening, two bombs, identical to those hidden by Vallina and "Farrás", hit the cortège of the king and President Loubet, in the Rue de Rohan (now Rue de Rivoli). Only one of the bombs exploded, injuring seventeen persons but leaving the king and the president unhurt. When the police went to the parks to recover the bombs, some of them were missing. The four imprisoned anarchists were put on trial, but absolved for lack of evidence. Once the other four had been arrested, the only person to know exactly where the bombs were hidden, was "Farrás". Intense international police persecution failed to get hold of him: the true Alejandro Farrás had died in 1904. Vallina's friend, the terrorist of the *rue de Rohan*, was in fact almost certainly Mateo Morral.³⁸

³⁵ Police reports, 17-19 May 1905, Arch. Nat., F⁷12513; *La Gazette du Palais* (Paris), 26 Nov. to 5 Dec. 1905; *Causa*, p. 360.

³⁶ Reports, 30 May, 1 and 18 June, 1905, Arch. Nat., F⁷12513.

³⁷ 30 June 1905, Arch. Nat., *loc. cit.*

³⁸ For Alejandro Farrás' death in Barcelona in August 1904, see telegram from Ossorio to La Cierva, Barcelona, 20 Dec. 1907, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2755 (Farrás' file). After the 1906 outrage, Farrás = Morral was the general opinion of the police. Malato said later that he thought that the Paris bomb was thrown by Morral; *Le Peuple* (Paris), 24 Mar. 1938. He could not, of course, say he was certain since he always claimed that he had had nothing to do with the matter. From the information we have, it is obvious that he was well placed to know the facts. In February 1907, Luis Bonafoux published an article in *El Diluvio* of Barcelona saying that Morral was Farrás, and that he had visited him, calling himself Farrás, at his home in Asnières. The true Farrás did not know Bonafoux: note from the Counsel of the Spanish Embassy in Paris to Allendesalazar, Paris, 26 Feb. 1907, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2757 (Malato's file). The anarchist Aviñó, whom the police thought in 1905 to be "Farrás", and who was suspected as such ever afterwards, did not look like "Farrás" or Morral: anthropometric record in a note from Cierva to Allendesalazar, 18 Feb. 1908, in Farrás, file, *loc. cit.* Leroy claims that the bomb was thrown by the "rationalist" schoolmaster Jesús Navarro Botella: *Los secretos*, pp. 199-201. There had been someone called Navarro with Vallina and "Farrás" in May 1905, who knew what was being planned: Report, Paris, 17 May 1905, Arch. Nat., F⁷12513. But it seems that he did not know where the bombs were hidden. Moreover, it appears that Jesús Navarro Botella, who had left Barcelona in Oct. 1904, was not in Paris at the time but in London: Bonnacarrère, 18 May 1905, *loc. cit.*, and *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2757 (Navarro Botella's file). It is not possible, however, to reject completely the hypothesis that Navarro Botella was "Farrás": physically they were very alike (— see his anthropometric card, *id.*); and the Barcelona anarchist and part-time informer M. Navarro Selma (no relation of his) also named Navarro Botella as one of Vallina's accomplices: Ossorio to La Cierva, 10 Feb. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

The next attempt on the king's life occurred on 31 May 1906, his wedding-day, in the Calle Mayor of Madrid. Once again, the Barcelona conspirators were involved. By that time, Morral had left the home of his parents, who had complied with his demand that his part of the inheritance be paid out to him in advance. After a short period in Algeria, where he served in the French Foreign Legion "just to see how it works",³⁹ he had taken up the post of librarian in the "Escuela Moderna" of Ferrer, with whom he had a joint bank account in the Barcelona branch of the *Crédit Lyonnais*.⁴⁰ Ferrer returned to Barcelona from one of his frequent trips to Paris on 28 April.⁴¹ Nicolás Estévez, formerly Minister of the Army in the First Republic and an enthusiastic revolutionary, a close personal friend of Vallina, Ferrer, Salvochea and Lerroux, had recently written to the latter, that he was hoping to come through Barcelona on his way to Cuba. Since legal proceedings were still pending in connection with one of Estévez's books, he asked Lerroux to find out whether it would be safe for him to visit Barcelona. Lerroux went to see the Civil Governor, the duke of Bivona, to talk the matter over with him. The Governor gave his word that Estévez would not be molested, on the condition that he come *incognito*. Having received this message, Estévez in Paris asked Ferrer to confirm to Lerroux that he would come, and that once he had crossed the frontier, where the instructions would be to let him pass, he would travel on secondary trains on which he would not be recognized, and arrive in Barcelona late at night. Ferrer would find accommodation for him and meet him at the station. Estévez reached Barcelona on 12 May. Four days later, Lerroux and Ferrer saw him off as he left for Havana. Estévez had brought with him to Spain the bomb which Morral was to toss into the royal wedding procession on 31 May.⁴² Morral himself went to Madrid on 20 May, fired by his anarchist ideals, but also, it would appear, by the wish to show

³⁹ Morral may have joined the Legion trying to get away from police investigation. On this episode, see declarations made by Juan Saliets, a fellow legionary, to the Spanish Consul in Oran, Bel Abbès, 9 June 1906, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2759 (Saliets' file).

⁴⁰ *Causa*, i, pp. 170, 322-6.

⁴¹ Report, 4 June 1906, *Préf. Pol.*, B.a/1075.

⁴² For the Estévez visit to Barcelona, see Lerroux, *Memorias*, pp. 459-61; *Causa*, iii, pp. 231-2, 39-40, 267. Lerroux claimed he did not know that Estévez was carrying the bomb. It is quite possible that this is true, and that, apart from Estévez himself and perhaps Morral, only Ferrer knew. Pío Baroja, who was a close friend of Estévez, tells that the latter became very pale when he was asked many years later in Paris by Javier Bueno, what he knew about the Morral affair. "I am certain", says Baroja, "that Estévez knew about it before it happened". An unnamed anarchist told Baroja that Estévez had carried the bomb: see P. Baroja, *Juventud, egolatría* (1917), O.C., v, p. 207. I have had a further confirmation of this from confidential sources. For Estévez's delight in bombs, even in his old age, see Vallina, *Memorias*, 65.

Ferrer's mistress, Soledad Villafranca, with whom he was in love, that he was brave and worthy of her love.⁴³ Meanwhile, Lerroux mobilized the revolutionary groups in Barcelona, and also organizations elsewhere on whose support he could count. He stationed detachments of sympathizers all along the roads leading to the Montjuich fortress, in readiness for the great moment when they would capture the fortress with the help of republican officers inside. A few militant republicans and anarchists met discreetly in the Ramblas on 31 May, armed with knives and pistols; these they intended to use to attack the sentries guarding the artillery depot, where they would be able to arm themselves more fully. Ferrer himself was sitting with six fellow-anarchists in the *Café Español*, waiting for news of the king's death and ready to give the signal for the insurrection to begin. He was joined there by Lerroux and they waited together. Morral threw the bomb according to plan. Twenty-three people died and 108 were seriously injured. But once again the king escaped unhurt. Ferrer and Lerroux went home in disgust, and the anarchists pawned their few firearms, planning to redeem them as soon as there was another opportunity.⁴⁴ Morral committed suicide to escape imminent arrest, and the authorities put Ferrer on trial; he was acquitted in 1907 for lack of conclusive proof of his guilt.

These failed assassinations had no serious political consequences. The king, whose remarkable *sang-froid* on both occasions won him much sympathy, dismissed them as "professional hazards". None of the political parties benefited or suffered as a result.⁴⁵ Even the anarchists did not find themselves more intensely persecuted.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Causa*, i, pp. 318 ff. Shortly before the assassination attempt, Morral had contracted venereal disease. *Causa*, ii, p. 323.

⁴⁴ For the events of Barcelona see Lerroux, *Memorias*, pp. 461-4; for information given by T. Herreros: Ossorio to La Cierva, 4 Nov. 1908 (Maura papers); *Causa*, ii, pp. 456 ff.; Bonnacarrère, Barcelona, 14 June 1906, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725. Leroy, *Los Secretos*, pp. 207-8.

⁴⁵ Following the Arenal attempt, the regionalists demonstrated to the cry of "Death to Lerroux", which fanned even more the tension between them and the republicans, and gave rise to the publication of one of Lerroux's most famous articles, entitled "The Crocodiles", in *La Publicidad*, 15 Apr. 1904. Ferrer's trial for complicity in the attempt sparked off a violent campaign on his behalf by the Lerroux radicals. See especially the articles by Lerroux in *El Progreso* (Barcelona, radical), 11 July, 26 Aug., 14 Aug., 23 Sept. 1906.

⁴⁶ The part played by Barcelona anarchists was not really apparent at the time, while in connection with the Calle Mayor outrage the theory gained acceptance that Morral had acted alone out of despair caused by an unhappy love affair. The anarchists denied having had anything to do with it and published a leaflet, *A la opinión pública*, disowning Morral. The decision to take this course was not reached, however, without provoking the angry opposition of the hot-heads (Dayna, Cendra, and others) at the anarchist headquarters, the *Centro de Estudios Sociales*: Bonnacarrère, Barcelona, 14 June 1906, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725.

III

“A MOST CURIOUS AND INEXPLICABLE POLITICAL PROBLEM”

Thus the British Consul General in Barcelona, who had spent many years of his life there and was well-acquainted with local politics, summed up in 1909 the general attitude towards quite another kind of terrorism — that of bombs planted at random in the streets of the city.⁴⁷ Confined almost entirely to Barcelona, this new wave of terrorism began on 6 April 1904, without anyone attaching the slightest importance to it at the time, since the bomb involved exploded far away from the route taken by the king.

No doubt most of the bombs of 1904-5 were genuinely anarchist in origin. Not only were all those brought to trial or treated as suspects in connection with such incidents anarchists; it was also the case that all the more powerful artefacts exploded in *this* period (for example, 17 November 1904, in the Calle Fernando, one killed and twenty wounded; 3 September 1905, several dead and wounded), and that many of them seem to have been directed against the Republicans. However this was not the classical type of anarchist terrorism, but rather a terrorism which did not select its victims, which deposited the bombs wherever it was easiest, and which afterwards accused the police of acts of provocation: muddle-headed terrorism, typical of a handful of muddled men, disoriented anarchists who retained none of their dogmas unimpaired except that of violence, and who had no clear idea of how to apply that. These years, 1904-5, were ones of bitterness for the anarchist movement in Catalonia.

Though the Montjuich repression of the 1890s had been a threat to many anarchists who opposed terrorism, it had certainly put an end to the predominance of the hot-heads and the bomb-throwers. And in the campaign that followed, the leading anarchists did not forget to blame the terrorist minority for having brought persecution upon all of them through their senseless acts. When the Spanish-American war of 1898 was over and Spain returned to political normality, there were no terrorists in Barcelona, and the anarchists concerned themselves primarily with the working-class struggle and the creation of unions, rather than with the throwing of bombs. Anarcho-syndicalism was as yet a thing of the future; the new generation of militants was young and inexperienced, and therefore impatient. But instead of taking the form of terrorist action, this

⁴⁷ F. Roberts to E. Grey, Barcelona, 28 Sept. 1909, Pub. Rec. Off., London, F.O. 371/642.

impatience had resulted in the General Strike of February and March 1902.⁴⁸

The ultimate failure of the General Strike of 1902 and the unsuccessful attempt to stage another one in 1903 had put a stop to the anarchist revival initiated at the turn of the century. Their rashness and intransigence cost the anarchists the goodwill of the working masses. Partly as a result of this and partly because of the economic crisis, the unions lost most of their members. The workers were turning towards republicanism. Disconcerted and reduced in numbers, the anarchists were also deeply divided, at daggers drawn among themselves ever since the 1902 General Strike; they accused each other of being *provocateurs* and worse. The foremost intellectuals and leaders of the movement, enemies of aimless violence and mainly concerned with fending off the disintegration of the organization as such, entered into a tactical alliance with the Republicans, a so-called *Liga de Defensa* to counter police persecution. But they did not bother or were unable to explain to their followers a step that was so contrary to the libertarian tradition. The tone of the anarchist press in this period was one of increasing ideological intransigence. The prophets of individualism, as in the early 1890s, regained the upper hand in the movement. Occasionally, recipes for explosives appeared once again in the anarchist press, together with instigations to "propaganda by the deed".⁴⁹ And a few went beyond writing or reading incitements to violent practices.

With few exceptions, the bombs of 1904-9 were little more than powerful fire-crackers and seemed better suited, particularly after 1906, to creating unrest and fomenting unease than to any other purpose. Indeed, the mechanics of the explosive devices could not have been more varied or improbable: coffee-grinders, unexploded army training-grenades, metal boxes, tin pans, bannister knobs, etc. The same can be said of the places chosen for the explosions — the front doors of tenement buildings, dark staircases, public conveniences. It would seem that the material damage caused was considered to be of secondary importance. Initially, the terrorists showed a preference for the two most important central avenues of the

⁴⁸ This outline of the Catalan anarchist movement and the observations on Radical republicanism that follow will be amplified in my forthcoming thesis on "Urban working-class politics in Catalonia, 1899-1909".

⁴⁹ Incitements to violence and a list of people "whose liquidation is necessary for the public good", in *La Huelga General, Edición revolucionaria* (Paris [in fact, Barcelona], Oct. 1904). Hintze-Ribeiro's agent speaks of a do-it-yourself typewritten booklet explaining how to make bombs circulated in Aug. 1904 among the Barcelona anarchists: letter of 9 Sept. 1904, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2751.

old city: Las Ramblas and Calle Fernando. When police vigilance made it increasingly difficult for explosive devices to be deposited there, they shifted their activities to the dank alleys of the slums on both sides of the Ramblas. Chased further afield by the systematic efforts of police and night-watchmen, they took to residential areas and finally to the markets, where there were always crowds of people and where someone with a bundle would not awaken suspicion. There, the smallest fire-crackers caused considerable damage.⁵⁰

Even less can be deduced from the distribution in time of these incidents, about the intention behind them and therefore about the probable authors. The regionalists could reasonably assume that they were directed against themselves and against Barcelona. But neither the timing nor the location of terrorist incidents lend weight to such an interpretation. In fact, many of the incidents seemed deliberately aimed at weakening the Republican party. Thus, the explosion of 4 September 1904, known as the Bomb of the High Court, coincided with the arrival in Barcelona of Lerroux after a propaganda tour of Galicia. Another coincided with the arrival of Blasco Ibáñez, the novelist and republican politician. The arrival of the republican leader Salmerón on 4 September 1905 was likewise marked by an explosion. Other bombs went off in the proximity of republican centres and one, on 17 February 1908, in front of the offices of the radical newspaper *El Progreso*. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that the incidence of some explosions corresponded particularly to periods leading up to elections, as in 1907, when they ceased as soon as the elections were over in May, and did not begin again until some six months later. In fact, the only pattern that can be established concerns the fact that the bombs tend to be concentrated in the periods of conservative government under Maura: six bombs exploded during his first term of office in 1904 and fifty-three during his second term, 1907-9. Only two bombs were found and there were no explosions while Azcárraga and Villaverde headed conservative governments (December 1904-June 1905), and only thirteen bombs marred the period of liberal government from June 1905 to January 1907. Even then, the two bombs which exploded

⁵⁰ For the geographical pattern, see Bonnacarrère, "Etude. — Les attentats de Barcelone. — Leurs causes", Barcelona, 20 Mar. 1908, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725. This does not, of course, mean that there was a clear pattern, merely a trend. For the amateur terrorists of Poble de Segur, and their fearsome coffee-grinder, see "Escrito de conclusiones provisionales formulado en la causa contra Buenaventura Pujal y otro", Lérida, 31 Aug. 1908 (La Cierva papers); army training grenades used by terrorists, in Ossorio to La Cierva, 23 Feb. 1908, *loc. cit.*

on 20 January 1907 went off at a time when Parliament was in recess and when it was abundantly clear that the Liberal government of Vega de Armijo was about to fall, as it did five days later.⁵¹ But, as we shall see, little enough can be deduced from the fact that the bulk of the explosions occurred during periods of conservative rule. For there is no reason to think that all the bombs were the work of one and the same group nor that they served a common purpose. For one thing, in view of the turbulence and fluidity of Catalan politics at that time, the terrorist incidents might well have been of use to a number of different groups at various times. Moreover, it was quite common at the time for men to change parties, and their changes of political allegiance were frequently accompanied by personal spite and by a sense of shame at ever having belonged to the group they suddenly deserted. Although the police records of the time have been systematically destroyed, it seems possible nevertheless to reconstruct the origins of much of this terrorism, particularly for the period 1904 to April 1907.

On 4 September 1904, the police discovered a bomb in a public convenience on the Ramblas, which was taken into the High Court building where it exploded. Two of the suspects, J. Navarro and Maurice Bernardon, managed to escape. Among those brought to trial, the main accused was Juan Rull, a young anarchist. Just before the trial, Tomás Herreros wrote to the French terrorist Bernardon, who had taught the Barcelona terrorists how to make inversion and time bombs, "we think the verdict will be favourable because a good

⁵¹ From April 1904 to the fall of Maura in Oct. 1909, 66 bombs went off (or were found before they exploded) in the streets of Barcelona; they caused at least 11 deaths and wounded 71 people. These are minimum figures. I have found no official statistics on terrorism in Barcelona. The estimate is based on the following sources, none of which give complete figures: Carreras Candi MSS, *Archivo de Historia Municipal*, Barcelona; M. Sastre, *Las huelgas en Barcelona y sus resultados en el año 1907* (Barcelona, 1908), p. 167; F. Soldevilla, *El año político 1909* (Madrid, 1909), pp. 220-1; "Atentados en Barcelona", and "La cuestión de Barcelona" (undated memoranda) in Romanones papers, Madrid, xii, 14. *La Publicidad* (1899-1906) and *El Progreso* (1906-9) (Barcelona, Republican); British Consular Reports from Barcelona which give information on the period (Aug.-Oct. 1909) when the Barcelona press was forbidden to discuss terrorism; see Publ. Rec. Off., F.O. 371/742-3; for this period see also *El Imparcial* (Madrid, Independent). The above figures do not include the 10 Orsini bombs found on 11 Nov. 1908; these cannot be accurately dated, since Spanish anarchists knew the Orsini method since the end of the nineteenth century. Neither do they include the bombs found in the Camp del Arpa in May 1906, the date of which cannot be determined either. Governor Ossorio believed that the Orsini bombs of 1908 were part of a recent plot of Spanish anarchists in Marseilles, connected with Ferrer's trial for the Madrid outrage of 1906: Ossorio to La Cierva, Barcelona, 10 Feb. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

campaign has been carried out".⁵² Even though the evidence was apparently quite overwhelming, Rull, who claimed that he had been framed by the police — the standard defence at the time in such cases⁵³ — was eventually acquitted.⁵⁴

On 5 March 1905, a Carnival Sunday, there was an anarchist meeting at the Bellas Artes Palace. A riot was organized, with shouts of "Long live anarchy", which was to be the signal if not for social revolution at least for serious disorders. It appears that the terrorists' plan was to throw bombs among the carriages on the main avenues of Barcelona that day. Felipe Pozzi, the tough chief prosecutor in Barcelona, had Arbós, Miranda, Santasusana (of the so-called *Comité de Acción*), the Rull brothers, Herreros, and up to twenty suspected terrorists, all put in gaol.⁵⁵

Then a few weeks later, the police discovered several bombs in the outlying suburb of El Coll. Six members of the anarchist group *Juventud Libertaria* (successor of the previous *Comité de Acción*) were tried. They were Alfredo Picoret, aged nineteen, a Mallorcan; his father, Primitivo Picoret, aged fifty-eight; Juan Tosas Oller, aged twenty-two, from Barcelona — all three were metal workers — Francisco Serra Claveguera, aged twenty-seven, a gilder from Barcelona; Pedro Bernadas Juliá, aged twenty-seven, a stonemason

⁵² T. Herreros to Bernardon from the Barcelona prison, 20 Dec. 1905, *Min. As. Extr.*, No. 2754 (Bernardon's file). Bernardon was then imprisoned in Milan by reason of the explosion which occurred while he was preparing a bomb — according to the police —, or fireworks — this was Bernardon's version: duke of Arcos to duke of Almadovar del Río, Rome (Quirinal), 18 Dec. 1905, *ibid.* For Bernardon's teachings in Barcelona before 1905, see Ossorio to La Cierva (telegram), 8 Feb. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

⁵³ Rull's protest was published in *La Publicidad*, 5 Oct. 1905. Lerroux maintained in Paris that the police had organized the Rue de Rohan outrage: *Gazette du Palais*, 2 Dec. 1905. The French Left tended to agree with him: see Aristide Briand, *La Lanterne*, 2 Dec. 1905. For other allegations of police terrorism in this period, see *La Publicidad*, 2 Aug. 1905; *El Progreso*, 30 June and 1 July 1905; *El Productor*, 16 Sept. 1905; *El Rebelde* (Barcelona, Anarchist), 21 Mar. 1908; *Tierra y Libertad* (Barcelona, Anarchist), 1 Jan. 1907 etc. As we shall see, the allegations of police provocation were not always entirely baseless.

⁵⁴ The police reports give the impression that Rull's conviction was practically certain and his release dealt a blow to police morale; Bonnacarrère, Barcelona, 19-20 July 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725. Rull's alibi was that he had spent the day in the Centro de Estudios Sociales. This was confirmed by the anarchists F. Miranda, T. Herreros, E. Pujol, M. Arbós, M. Basons, T. de la Torre, and M. Castellote.

⁵⁵ Pozzi's account, in his letter to La Cierva, Seville, 2 July 1907 (La Cierva papers, Murcia): "This was not completely proven in the court record, but we had the moral conviction, which was later confirmed at the trials for the bombs of El Coll, that they wished to do this, so as to place the city under the empire of terror".

from Barcelona; Joaquin Corominas, aged twenty-three, a saddler.⁵⁶ Upon his arrest, Picoret junior volunteered full information about the terrorist organization of which he was a member. He said later (July-August 1905) that it had all been an invention of the police, who wanted to make him say things that were untrue, and he retracted all his statements publicly. Yet the incriminating statements started soon after his arrest in June 1905, and were contained in letters written in his prison cell. This circumstance makes his complaints of police brutality sound less convincing, because it would seem that, then as later, the police did not torture detainees once they had left the police station for the prison, and once the legal case had been opened.⁵⁷

The figure of Picoret is fairly typical: he was young, unstable, neurotic. He had been a member of the metal workers' union since he was thirteen years old, and there he met other anarchists, spending his free time in meetings, or reading, dreaming and conspiring — the only compensations in a bleak, hostile world.⁵⁸

The situation in which the Barcelona anarchists found themselves at this time was almost bound to generate the kind of lunatic fringe terrorism we have seen. Without the support of the workers, the movement was reduced to a nucleus of militant veterans (like Herreros, Basons, Castellote, Lorenzo, Prat, Ferrer) and a pleiad of young unknowns, many of them without professions, pedantic, jacobinical, enamoured of intolerance, men who preferred Nietzsche to Tolstoy, who despised the followers of the latter — their elders within the movement — calling them “Christians”, and who swore by Ibsen. Their headquarters were in the *Centro de Estudios Sociales*. There, and in the Café of the *Teatro Circo el Español*, they spent their leisure hours, arguing heatedly and dreaming. Anarchism had lost its way, it was stationary, inactive. Only the two attempts at “tyrannicide” had briefly interrupted the monotony, but for reasons of security, only a few men had been involved in them. The great

⁵⁶ Bonnecarrère, Barcelona, 5 June 1905, No. 248F., *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12513.

⁵⁷ The tortures in the military fortress of Montjuich were an exception; this was a military prison. Picoret's denunciation in his letter to his lawyer, J. Puig de Asprer, see *La Publicidad*, 2 Aug. 1905. On this trial, see Bonnecarrère, “November 1905, procès anarchistes, les bombes del Coll”, Barcelona, 15-17 Nov. 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725; and Barcelona, 19 June 1905, and 27 July 1905, No. 278F and 338F, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12513. The case was dismissed by the jury, after more accusations of police provocation and threats: “We shall deny those who condemn them the right to live”, Herreros had said at a public meeting: *La Publicidad*, 9 Oct. 1905.

⁵⁸ Bonnecarrère, on Picoret, 15-17 Nov. 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725. For Picoret's mental unbalance, see also *La Publicidad*, 16 Nov. 1905.

majority of anarchists could not help but feel that there was nothing for them to do. There were moments in which it seemed possible (or rather in which the anarchists had convinced themselves), that a revolutionary coup might be attempted, and at such times they busied themselves with preparations and the collecting of arms.⁵⁹ But nothing ever came of their hopes. There is no easily discernible reason why this anarchism should not have produced more terrorists of the classic type, like Artal, and should instead have given rise to a group of less courageous hit-and-run terrorists who, by being less courageous, were also less effective, since they limited themselves to furtive violence of minimal tactical importance.

Yet, in itself, this secondary terrorism can be explained in terms of the internal dynamic of the Catalan anarchist movement, and by placing the latter in its context of local politics. On the one hand, the anarchist organization maintained itself. In the absence of severe persecution, the various groups managed to remain intact. At the same time, however, their political importance diminished and they became ever more marginal. They had no share in local political life, in the matters which were at the centre of political discussion — these were the almost exclusive domain of the two large parties, the republicans and the regionalists, which both had their electoral machine, their hierarchies and their causes. The old-timers of anarchism, though pessimistic and confused, persevered — out of philosophical conviction, devotion to their ideals, or generosity — with their “classical” forms of political action: the spoken and the written word, shop-floor agitation, etc. They were soon to find in syndicalism a suitable channel for their ideals. But for the restless youngsters like Rull, Picoret, J. Comas, J. Coca, M. Arbós, anarchism was no more than what the Catalan anarchist Miguel Almereyda, speaking of himself, called “a theoretic fixation of a natural lack of discipline”, and under these circumstances, they were bound to be susceptible to any apologia for violence for its own sake. One should not exaggerate or idealize the altruism of these young anarchists. If they identified themselves with the exploited working class, it was only as long as the workers, their only probable audience, would look on them as leaders and heed their counsel. When the workers took no notice of them, they despised “those sheep . . . miserable puppets . . . cowards” as Ricardo Mella himself called them. Cut off from

⁵⁹ For the vague revolutionary coup- and assassination plots that came to nothing, see Bonnecarrère, 10 May 1906, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12725; Ossorio to La Cierva, 4 Jan. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid); Ossorio to Maura, 19 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid).

the working class, the anarchists turned in on themselves, and from 1903 to 1907 they lived apart in the inbred world of their threadbare centres and publications.⁶⁰

It is worthwhile considering this dual phenomenon of the permanence and the inbred nature of these groups: we are faced with a situation not unlike that of the delinquent gang, with its potent subculture of violence and its strong internal conformism, as well as its insistence on breaking with all the values established outside the group in order the better to preserve its internal cohesion. Spanish anarchists exiled in London were of the opinion that certain acts of terrorism in Barcelona had no other object than to demonstrate the anarchist purism of those responsible to rival anarchist groups. The bombs which were clearly directed against the republicans can be seen in terms of protective provocation on the part of those anarchists who feared the consequences of an alliance with the republicans. Moreover, within the restricted world of the anarchist groups themselves, where all other activity was at a stand-still, acts of terrorism were probably a means of raising one's status. It is certainly true to say that the leaders, while refusing to become personally involved in these matters, shielded the terrorists by remaining silent and sometimes by protecting them more actively. And though they did not advocate violence and were against terrorism, they were — as in the 1890s — unable or unwilling to put forward any coherent arguments condemning such excesses.⁶¹

The radical transformation of political life in Catalonia in 1906 and 1907 was to have a profound effect on the anarchist movement, and on the libertarian attitude towards terrorism. As a result of the events of 25 November 1905, when a group of army officers besieged and partly destroyed the premises of two regionalist newspapers, the beginning of 1906 saw the creation of *Solidaridad Catalana*, the political alliance of most local parties and groups around the regionalist

⁶⁰ Almereyda: *Le Libéraire* (Paris), 8 Jan. 1904. For more on Almereyda, see V. Serge, *Mémoires d'un révolutionnaire* (Paris, 1951), p. 36. R. Mella, see *Natura* (Barcelona, Anarchist), 1 Dec. 1903.

⁶¹ For the connection of terrorism with the notion of anarchist purity, see the anonymous report from London, 3 Dec. 1904, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725. There are many sources on the protection given by anarchist leaders to their terrorist fringe and the connections between them. Thus Morral's name was given by Picoret in the course of his trial as the one who financed the bombs (Ferrer's name was not given): Bonnacarrère, 14 June 1906, *loc. cit.*; there is some indication that Ferrer helped J. Navarro and M. Bernardon to leave Spain after the bomb explosion in the High Court: *Gilles*, Paris, 13 and 19 Apr. 1908, *Préf. Pol.*, B.a/1511; F. Miranda allowed A. Lluán and R. Esteve to stay at his home on their way to Madrid where they were planning to assassinate the judge presiding over the Ferrer trial, but he tried to persuade them not to go through with it: Ossorio to Maura, 19 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid).

banner. This alliance split the republican party in Barcelona and deprived it of the support of almost all its middle-class electorate, as well as of most of its leadership, since practically all the Catalans among its leaders joined the *Solidaridad*. Thus deserted, and faced with a monolithic block of regionalists, Lerroux had no choice but to continue the struggle of non-regionalist republicanism single-handed, with only the (growing) support of the republican working class. In the storm of controversy that shook Barcelona in 1906 and 1907, the party of Lerroux cast overboard all the pretensions and trappings of respectability, which had formerly been the hall-mark of established republicanism. Radicalism, as *lerrouxismo* came to be called, acquired a demagogy all its own, and became more than ever the party of the have-nots. Not that it preached imminent revolution, not that its ideology was in any way distinct from traditional republicanism; but the style had changed — it became crassly anti-bourgeois and used the language of Jacobinism. Since many old-time republican party workers had gone over to *Solidaridad Catalana*, Lerroux had urgent need of anyone who could write reasonably well and speak in public. Thus there was a chance of instant popularity and leadership for anyone with such abilities who chose to join his party. Many anarchists, most of them apparently from the groups of unstable young men we have described, wasted no time in deserting the libertarian camp and joining Lerroux who now had a clearer revolutionary image. There was suddenly a great deal of scope for them in the flourishing radical press, in the pulpits of the party's headquarters, the *Casa del Pueblo*, and they were not above attacking their former fellows, the anarchists.⁶²

While all this was going on the established leadership of anarchism, seeing its ranks depleted and threatened with total disintegration,

⁶² J. Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week — A Study of anticlericalism in Spain 1875-1912* (Harvard U.P., 1968), pp. 87-8, follows A. Marvaud, *La question sociale en Espagne* (Paris, 1910), pp. 93-4, 402-3 in saying that the anarchists who joined Lerroux remained anarchists at heart and considers the radical publications *La Rebeldía* and *El Descamisado* as anarchist oriented. The available evidence contradicts such an interpretation of this important point. Of the anarchists who went over to Lerroux in 1906-7, J. Coca, in whose Paris flat "Farrás" had stayed prior to the Rue de Rohan outrage (M. Leydet to the Spanish authorities, Paris, 26 July 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513) started in 1907 writing frankly anti-anarchist articles in *La Rebeldía* (14 Nov. 1907 etc.); Lorenzo Pahissa, formerly a regular contributor to *El Productor*, became Labour correspondent of *El Progreso* in 1906 (see the issue of 18 July 1908); Luis Bertrán explained that he had joined *lerrouxismo* because he thought it more practical and revolutionary than anarchism — see his *Yo Acuso: El testamento de Ferrer* (Barcelona, 1911), pp. 6-7; M. Arbós, who had been chairman of the second anarchist *Comité de Acción* (see Bonnacarrère, 6 June 1905, *loc. cit.*), said that radicalism was distinct from "politics" as criticized by the anarchists, *El Progreso*, 24 Feb. 1907. There is other similar evidence.

turned towards syndicalism and founded in Barcelona a Federation of Trades Unions (*Solidaridad Obrera*), which aimed, for tactical reasons, to limit itself to the economic struggle. We cannot here go at any length into the origins of syndicalism. It must suffice to say that the old leaders were totally converted and committed to this new policy. It is clear from the articles they wrote at the time, that with very few exceptions (such as José Prat) they did not really grasp the full theoretical and strategic implications of syndicalism before 1910. But it is equally clear that they felt they had at last found a way, a suitable line to follow. They were forced by circumstances to become syndicalists, but once they had made up their minds, they really put their heart and strength into building up the Federation of Trades Unions and widening its scope. And this attitude did of course imply, among many other things, a passionate hatred of any terrorism that might imperil the workers' organizations. For syndicalism could not live but in an atmosphere of legality and feared nothing so much as repression. This need was so basic that when bombs continued to explode, Tomás Herreros, one of the most enthusiastic and respected anarcho-syndicalists, saw fit to become an informer and gave the Civil Governor information in an effort to wipe out terrorism.⁶³

For in spite of the fact that the lives of many who may earlier have been involved in terrorism were now taken up by radicalism or syndicalism, the bombs went on exploding. Indeed, after a lull of several months, in December 1906 a new series began: seven bombs exploded in the period from 24 December 1906 to 8 April 1907, killing one person and injuring eleven. In July 1907, the police arrested Juan Rull, his brother Hermenegildo, his mother and father and, among the minor suspects, a former Carlist called Perelló. The trial lasted a whole year; Rull was eventually condemned to death and the other main defendants to long terms of imprisonment. Rull, who had until 1906 been a sincere though somewhat confused anarchist, had found it impossible to adapt to the changes which anarchism had undergone and had turned into a mercenary terrorist. He had been employed in a factory belonging to Count de Güell, and persuaded the latter to provide him with an introduction to the

⁶³ Other anarchists, like Manuel Navarro Selma, chose likewise to inform on the terrorists, but their motives are not clear since they, unlike Herreros were paid. "I refrained from putting the matter on to a financial basis", wrote Ossorio to La Cierva, 7 Jan. 1907, "because Herreros is a convinced anarchist incapable of selling himself. This reputation of his, which I was able to test carefully, kept me from even insinuating anything of the kind" (Ossorio papers, Madrid).

duke of Bivona, Civil Governor of Barcelona under the Moret government (December 1905-July 1906). Rull offered to prevent further acts of terrorism, and to give information which would lead to the arrest of bomb-throwers if there were further incidents. Bivona paid up, and while he was Governor there was only one bomb, which did not explode. In July, after the fall of Moret, López Dominguez formed a Liberal government and sent Francisco Manzano to Barcelona as Governor. Manzano, who had held the same post in 1902, refused to give Rull any money unless he provided useful information, and the bomb incidents promptly increased. When the Conservatives came to power in January 1907, Rull offered his services to the new Governor, A. Ossorio y Gallardo; Ossorio did not trust him and accepted in the hope that in this way Rull and his accomplices could eventually be caught. Rull became ever more demanding — in the four months prior to his arrest he received the equivalent of almost 150 pounds sterling. Increasingly reckless, he made threats and when Ossorio started showing signs of disagreement and refused to give him all the money he demanded, bombs began again to explode in the streets. One day, off his guard, he was arrested. At the trial it became apparent that he had made the matter of the bombs into a family business, and it was his aged mother who actually deposited many of them.⁶⁴

But the elimination of Rull did not put an end to terrorism in Barcelona. From May 1907 there was six months' respite; then the bombs began to go off again in December, while he was in prison. There was an explosion the day he was executed, 8 August 1908; nine more bombs exploded before the "Tragic Week" of July 1909,

⁶⁴ The most complete account of Rull's activities, in Antonio Tressols, *Memoria*, of 28 Feb. 1907. This secret report was addressed to Ossorio, although some copies of it were circulated among Barcelona and Madrid authorities. Tressols enlarged his report and brought it up to date in a document dated 4 May 1907, signed by him, to be found in the Romanones papers, Madrid. See the press July 1907 to August 1908, *passim*. The sentence is reproduced by E. Iglesias, "Resumen Histórico", in E. Navarro (ed.), *Historia crítica de los hombres del republicanismo catalán en la última década (1905-1914)*, (Barcelona, 1915), pp. 98-100. For Rull's activities under Bivona and Manzano, see Manzano's statements and the prosecutor's indictment during the trial: E. Carqué de la Parra (ed.) *El terrorismo en Barcelona* (Barcelona, 1908), pp. 50, 77-8. For his dealings with Ossorio, see the latter's letters and cables to Maura and La Cierva, particularly one that is not dated, but is between 28 Mar. and 5 Apr. 1907, 23 June 1907 and 19 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid). The verdict against him was given hastily and under considerable pressure: "The verdict is not surprising" wrote Engenio d'Ors. "... Most probably it is not unfair But I know that it is ugly": E. d'Ors, *Glossari* (Barcelona, 1950), p. 729. The evidence of his guilt was certainly overwhelming. For a general description of Rull's trial and the feelings it aroused, see Tomás Caballé Clos, *La Criminalidad en Barcelona* (Barcelona, 1945).

and a further seventeen after that, up to Maura's fall on 21 October of that year. There is not sufficient evidence to establish who was responsible for these bombs. The Governor of Barcelona set down the following list of suspects:

The anarchists themselves, so as to ruin, without running any risks, a powerful bourgeois society. The *lerrouxistas*, as a weapon against the Catalan nationalists. The separatists, as a means of wrecking the authority of the State (some distinguished and serious-minded members of the *Unión catalanista*⁶⁵ have long maintained that Catalan national identity cannot be revived until after the present Catalan well-being is broken down). Renegade anarchists, in order to harm their comrades. Greedy men, like Morales and Rull, for their own convenience. Some of these have been behind the bombs; perhaps several have been; perhaps all. But the hands that held them, the professionals of crime, the experts on explosions, we should not seek anywhere but among the anarchist rabble . . . If they did not exist, their paymasters would not find it so easy to purchase them.⁶⁶

Nonetheless, we can narrow the field of possible suspects quite a bit by a process of elimination. It is not probable that the latter wave of explosions was the work of informers, for those remaining in the Governor's pay once Rull had been eliminated were few, well chosen and received little money for their services.⁶⁷ There seem to be few grounds for holding the separatists responsible, even though it proved difficult for informers to penetrate the nationalist groups and to establish that they were definitely not involved. There were few militant separatists in Catalonia at the time, and it seems that these few expressed their aggressiveness in words and in sending subversive postcards.⁶⁸ Only by exposing the terrorists could the

⁶⁵ *Unió Catalanista* was the most intransigent of the home-rule organizations, conservative and opposed to political action. Its members were more inclined to poetry than to violence.

⁶⁶ Ossorio to La Cierva, 9 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid).

⁶⁷ On informers, see Ossorio to La Cierva, 23 June 1907, 21 Dec. 1907, and 7 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid). Ossorio distrusted informers who offered to reveal great secrets, and preferred the technique of infiltration: *ibid.*, 29 Dec. 1907.

⁶⁸ Ossorio wrote to La Cierva on 29 Dec. 1907 that his penetration of the ultra-nationalist groups was "still very insufficient" (Ossorio papers, Madrid). In January 1908 the police searched the premises of the *Liga nacionalista catalana* (Separatist), and its leader, a certain Soronellas, fled. At that time the authorities suspected that the bombs might well originate in the separatist camp. Ossorio to La Cierva, cable 4 Jan. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid); Inspector Pineda to Ossorio, Perpignan, 26 Feb. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia); the fullest account of possible links between separatists and terrorists, in: Ossorio to Cierva, 23 Feb. 1908, *loc. cit.* But they never found any hard evidence to support this. Antonio Tressols, chief inspector of the Barcelona police, thought that the separatists were behind Rull; he made a veiled allusion in this sense during the trial when he said that "high-placed persons" were behind the terrorism, but he had to admit that he had no proof (Ossorio to La Cierva, letters of 2 Apr., 3/5 Apr., No. 54 and 6 Apr. 1908: Maura papers, Madrid).

suspicion be allayed that the *lerrouxistas* were responsible: this was the theory advanced by the regionalists themselves, and from time to time the Governor shared their suspicions. On the other hand we know that the *lerrouxista* headquarters, the Casa del Pueblo, was "very well" covered by the Governor's agents,⁶⁹ who never reported any evidence or even the slightest hint of involvement in terrorist activities. And it is unlikely that the *lerrouxista* organization — which was open to all, and which had no shock-troops on the lines of the weak and short-lived *Federación revolucionaria* (1903-6), — engaged in any systematic terrorism. As for the syndicalists, we have seen how hostile they were to terrorism.⁷⁰ It seems that we must reject the idea of a terrorist pyramid, as conceived by Ossorio, with mercenaries and fanatics at the base, the known anarchist militants above them and then "the aristocrats of anarchy and the passionate *lerrouxistas*, with Lerroux himself at the apex of it all".⁷¹

The only lead which the police seems to have had point to the likeliest group of all, to the small nucleus of pure anarchists, who clung to their old ideas and were passionately opposed to syndicalism: Dayna, M. Arbós (until he went over to *lerrouxismo* halfway through 1907), J. Sola, F. Miranda and perhaps, though for different reasons, Francisco Ferrer. Though it is unlikely that such men would have handled bombs themselves, they may easily have encouraged some of their young followers, or at least given them protection. For instance, it is quite clear from police sources that these men received instructions from Ferrer in January 1907 — when he was awaiting trial for the Morral outrage of 1906 — to make sure, by organizing a campaign or "by any other means" that he would be acquitted. In a letter to Sola, Ferrer wrote that he was prepared to pay whatever was necessary. The anarchists thereupon organized an Action Committee. In March 1907 some unidentified Barcelona anarchists circulated pamphlets containing formulae for making explosives which were thought to have been printed in the local anarchist printers' cooperative (*La Neotipia*). This coincided with the period of Rull's free-lance activities. Though he was still being lavishly paid

⁶⁹ Ossorio to La Cierva, 29 Dec. 1907 (Ossorio papers).

⁷⁰ Some anarchists gave evidence against Rull at his trial, among them Tomás Herreros, and the young Salvador Seguí (*Noy del Sucre*), against whom the radicals campaigned in the pages of *El Progreso*.

⁷¹ Ossorio to Maura, 28 June 1907 (Maura papers, Madrid). The theory of a wide-ranging anarchist conspiracy was given some substance not only by the statements of Tressols but also by allusive remarks by Rull himself; Rull could not, however, prove anything of the kind and did not provide a single lead, even in the last-minute "revelations" he made before his death. See Carqué, *El terrorismo*, pp. 97 ff.

by the authorities, it is conceivable that he made some extra money in connection with this campaign.⁷²

Though little else is known about the actual preparation and execution of the bomb outrages of this period, further indications point to the "pure" anarchists as the most probable authors behind most of them. In March 1908 it was claimed in certain libertarian circles that the bombs were of anarchist origin. It seems likely that of the 1908 bombs, two in particular, containing contraceptives, were planted by neo-malthusian anarchists. An anonymous letter to Inspector Arrow, shakily written and misspelt, also had an unmistakably anarchist flavour:

The bombs that have been put until now are so that the people wake up, and once they are woken up we shall throw bombs at those who let their souls be stolen and think that they have no responsibility because they only obey orders. And what about freedom of choice then?⁷³

The Minister of the Interior was probably right when — a reward of 100,000 ptas. having already proved fruitless in the attempt to discover the terrorists — he said, "This all leads one to think that the origin lies in anarchism, and that when such a considerable reward as the one announced is not sufficient to discover the authors, there are very few people involved".⁷⁴

And then there were always some shady characters around, who could be bought or hired. Some of these were anarchists, but not all; at least two, called Perelló and Laroche, were Carlists or friends of Carlists.⁷⁵ If any of the bombs were paid for, then they were perhaps paid for by tavern-keepers, brothel-keepers and pimps, antagonized by recent measures imposed by Maura's Minister of the Interior, Juan de la Cierva, who was attempting to regulate their

⁷² Ferrer's letter, and later anarchist moves in this connection: Bonnacarrère, 29 Jan. 1907, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12725. The pamphlets of March 1907 are mentioned in a Ministry of the Interior document (Maura papers, Madrid).

⁷³ Rumours in anarchist circles; Bonnacarrère, 20 Mar. 1908, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12725. Bombs with contraceptives: id., 2 July 1908, *loc. cit.*, and duke of Bivona to count Romanones, 23 Feb. 1906: Romanones papers, Madrid, xii, 29. The anonymous letter, dated 12 Aug. 1907, from "a deserter", also contained threats against Arrow himself and the king. E. Prat de la Riba papers (private, Barcelona), Prest. v.c/5/15.

⁷⁴ The reward of 100,000 ptas. to anyone giving information about the terrorists leading to conviction, in *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Barcelona*, 23 Apr. 1909. La Cierva's comment, in a telegram to Ossorio, 29 June 1909 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

⁷⁵ Perelló was seriously compromised by the Rull trial, but was defended by the public prosecutor and by the private counsel for the prosecution, both of them Carlists. Laroche, suspected of having had a hand in another explosion, was also defended by a Carlist lawyer, and was never even brought to trial: Ossorio to La Cierva, cable 6 July 1909 (Maura papers, Madrid).

activities.⁷⁶ But one way or another, the evidence remains inconclusive.

IV

THE NEED FOR REPRESSION, ITS FAILURE AND EXCESSES

The impact of this terrorism on Spanish politics was disproportionately great because it involved a number of political factors. Catalan political life was poisoned by it, and the increased tension led not only to an ill-feeling which widened the gulf between regionalists and republicans — who accused each other of encouraging or protecting the bomb-throwers — but also accentuated the negative, merely anti-government character of both parties.

From the very beginning, the regionalists saw in the bombs the confirmation of their charge that successive governments cared little for Catalonia and neglected the region. Even back in 1904, when a bomb exploded in the Calle Fernando, the regionalist *Lliga* and a number of local bodies called for drastic measures to be taken.⁷⁷ In 1905, after the explosion in the Rambla de las Flores, local bodies and leaders of the community decided to create a private police force that would maintain public order in Barcelona.⁷⁸ At that time, this was probably more a threat than a firm intention, but the principle had been accepted.

As time went on and *Solidaridad Catalana* was formed, nationalist sentiment ran high and tension in the city increased. In the first months of 1907 the supporters of *Solidaridad* were in the middle of "their lyrical phase", as the Governor put it — preparing for the provincial elections due in March and the general elections scheduled for April, and as yet unaware of any dissension within their own ranks. Rull's bombs and the consequent scandal converted their resentment over what they considered the government's neglect of Catalonia into a suspicion that there was something more sinister afoot. The regionalist leader Enrique Prat de la Riba expressed the feelings of the Catalan upper and middle classes thus: people were leaving Barcelona, he warned; the rich were emigrating, investment in construction was on the decrease, and at nightfall the streets were empty; as a result of all this

the doubt emerges, as to whether the sum total of the bomb outrages and disturbances in the streets may not be something other than a natural sickness

⁷⁶ After Sept. 1907, Ossorio frequently hinted that this could be a possible source of terrorism: e.g. cable to La Cierva, 17 Dec. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid).

⁷⁷ *La Veu de Catalunya* (Regionalist, Barcelona), 19 Nov. 1904.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 Sept. 1905.

... of our organism, the realization of a programme publicly formulated by certain newspapers that are published in the capital of Spain: the program of razing Catalonia to the ground and of covering it in salt — Barcelona has seen that no steps have been taken to check the newspapers that propagated such theories, or the demagogy of Lerroux — and thus an even more serious doubt has arisen in the consciousness of the people: the idea of a possible complicity in this campaign of men and political groups that . . . are, have been and will ever be the powers, the government and the State.⁷⁹

This distrust took on a very special form with the creation of an independent secret police exclusively devoted to the suppression of terrorism. On 20 January 1907, the leading local bodies met at the house of the Manufacturers' Association and agreed that they "could not and ought not rely on the government or resort to it for help" in maintaining the security of Barcelona. Thereupon they founded the *Junta de Defensa de Barcelona*. Summoned by the Civil Governor as a result, they went to see him, but made it clear that they considered it merely a courtesy call and that they were not asking him for anything, since their many previous petitions on the subject of law and order had been without effect. On 28 January, more than three hundred local bodies and associations held a meeting in the town hall, against the will of the *lerrouxista* aldermen. There they approved the creation of a new police force which would be answerable only to the local authorities, "the true representatives of Barcelona opinion".⁸⁰

Prat de la Riba applied himself to the organization of this new police forthwith. It soon became apparent that what had seemed a bright idea and a means of causing the government acute embarrassment, was in fact a *faux pas*. Firstly, there were legal difficulties: no

⁷⁹ E. Prat de la Riba, "La cuestión de Barcelona — Memoria para leer", 1907, Prat de la Riba papers, Prest. I.c.7/14. Though this sounds like nothing more than nationalist demagogy, there was more to it than that: when the regionalists sent Arrow to Madrid to investigate the possible origins of Barcelona terrorism, they gave him a list of suspects including Moret and the Count of Romanones, leaders of the Liberal party: E. Grant Duff, Memorandum, Inclosure to D.1751, Confidential, 22 June 1907, Pub. Rec. Off., F.O. 371/336. For the time being, I can see no means of establishing whether the drop in property investment was due to terrorism, or simply to the fact that investment was going into other sectors. The exodus of people with small private incomes is vouched for by many different sources, even republican ones: see e.g. *La Publicidad*, 19 Jan. 1906. Other sources indicate that the public alarm caused by the bombs was less than the different political organizations pretended to believe; see e.g. the catholic *Aurora Social*, 4 Jan. 1908.

⁸⁰ This account, from the *Memoria de los trabajos realizados el año 1907* of the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, which was very active in the organization of the Junta de Defensa (Barcelona 1908), pp. 48-9. For the republican opposition to allowing the Town Hall to be used for the meeting, see F. Manzano to La Cierva, Barcelona, 28 Jan. 1907 (La Cierva papers, Murcia). (Manzano was still the liberal governor, since Ossorio did not arrive until 30 Jan., although the Conservative government had been sworn in on 25 Jan.).

private body or local government agency could set up a police force of its own without infringing on the sovereignty of the State. Having failed to get the word "police" approved, the Commission had to make do with the far less satisfactory "Office of Criminal Investigation" (O.I.C.). For making arrests and similar police functions they had no choice but to make use of the provincial *Mozos de Escuadra*, even though these would merely follow the recommendations of the O.I.C., their chiefs being responsible directly to the Minister of Defence.⁸¹

Then, there were practical problems. Anxious to have the O.I.C. controlled by someone who would be impervious to government pressure, its founders imported a man from Scotland Yard, Chief inspector Charles Arrow of the C.I.D., who retired prematurely in order to take up this extraordinary assignment on a three-year contract. When he arrived in Barcelona to take charge of his legions, he found that they consisted of two chief inspectors, two clerks, four sergeants and thirty constables. Matters were further complicated by the fact that Mr. Arrow could not speak a word of either Spanish or Catalan.

The Civil and Military Governors politely refrained from putting additional obstacles in his way, and in January 1908 Arrow's O.I.C. was granted full legal recognition. But by that time even the right wing of the *solidarios* was beginning to wonder how it could rid itself of its private police force. The difficulties of practical politics had put an end to the "lyrical phase" of catalanism. Prat de la Riba prevented the dissolution of the force, if only "for the sake of self-respect and correct behaviour". In actual fact, Arrow's police was of no use whatsoever, since it was undermined by the wrangles among its original backers, by internal rivalries, and by paid infiltrators.⁸² Moreover, its mere existence added to the tension between the *solidarios* and the radicals, who constantly attacked it and called it the

⁸¹ Ossorio to La Cierva, 26 Sept. 1907 (La Cierva papers, Murcia). The agreement of the provincial Commission: 14 Sept. 1907; Ossorio's *exequatur*: 20 Sept. 1907, *loc. cit.*

⁸² For more details on Charles Arrow and his police force, see Charles Arrow, *My Reminiscences*, chaps. xxiv-xxx, *Evening News*, 4-11 Aug. 1910. He later published his memoirs in book form, *Rogues and others* (London, 1922); they contain an incorrect version of his Barcelona experiences. The best sources on the O.I.C. are Pub. Rec. Off., F.O. 371/336, 524, 525, 526, 743. For the regionalists' internal difficulties and Prat de la Riba's comments thereon, see Ossorio to La Cierva, 26 Sept. and 27 Dec. 1907 (Ossorio papers, Madrid). For Charles Arrow's endless troubles with his colleagues in the O.I.C., see his Memorandum, Inclosure in M. de Bunsen, No. 168, 28 Nov. 1908, Pub. Rec. Off., F.O. 731/526. "That Arrows's police force", wrote Ossorio to Cierva on 28 Feb. 1909, "is a catastrophe. They are indisciplined and rebellious"; the two chiefs had, by then, been fired by Arrow and were campaigning in the press against him, while Arrow bombarded the Commission with memoranda (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

“bourgeois police”, while consistently refusing to help the *solidarios* out of their *impasse* by taking the responsibility for suppressing the O.I.C. upon themselves.⁸³ The regionalists went on accusing the government of neglecting Barcelona, but with ever less conviction in the face of the government’s obviously determined, though singularly unsuccessful efforts to clear the city of terrorists. In time, they were even prepared to collaborate with the government in this matter — not that this brought any results either.⁸⁴

For Barcelona republicanism, terrorism was extremely important as an *issue*. When Lerroux had arrived on the scene in 1901, he had found the working masses in desperate circumstances. Prices were rising much more rapidly than wages, and at the same time there was much redundancy and unemployment. About 50 per cent of the Barcelona working-class population were illiterate. Official statistics and sources reveal the awfulness of their living conditions. There was a very high incidence of tuberculosis, typhoid and smallpox. These underprivileged masses had little contact with the established culture or the middle classes. The church did not take much interest in their plight, and relatively little was done in the way of welfare and charity. Lerroux offered these masses municipal patronage and set up self-help organizations and schools, financed in part out of funds provided by rich republicans (at least until 1906, when it seems that most of them joined *Solidaridad Catalana*).

But all this was little enough with which to capture and sustain the allegiance of the workers to republicanism. And thus, the logic of the situation complementing his own convictions on this point, Lerroux did his best to mobilize the workers in support of his ideas. He spoke of Justice, Revolution, Dignity and Unity to the abandoned masses. As a first step, he aroused their anger against *caciquismo* (the political machines) and the rigging of elections. From the very beginning, in 1901, Lerroux made it quite clear that henceforth the arbitrary actions of the *caciques* (political bosses) and the irregularities of the police would no longer be meekly tolerated. He took demo-

⁸³ *Ibid.* By that time, as Radical councilman J. Pinilla pointed out to the *solidario* Durán, the only plausible justification they could find for their *faux pas* was that Arrow’s police had obliged the government to take seriously the police question, *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Ossorio to Maura (cable) 3 Jan. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid). After the explosion in the Boquería market (15 Mar. 1908), Prat de la Riba and Cambó arranged with Ossorio to offer a reward for evidence leading to the discovery of the terrorists; verbatim account of telephone conversation between Ossorio and La Cierva, 19 Mar. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid). On 22 Apr. 1909, local banks handed over 50,000 pesetas to the Chief of Police for this purpose: *La Veu de Catalunya*, 23 Apr. 1909.

cratic control of the Executive into the streets and became the nearest possible modern equivalent to a *tribunus plebis*. Every case of tampering with elections, every case of police brutality would henceforth provoke the wrath of Lerroux's cohorts and lead to riotous disorders. But the battle for honest elections was soon won, and by the end of 1901 the domination of the *caciques*, which they themselves had held to be impregnable, had melted away like wax. Suddenly republicanism found itself without an issue that could capture the imagination. Flagging enthusiasm was revived in 1903 by the creation of the *Unión Republicana* and its success at the polls in Catalonia and elsewhere. But by 1904 this impetus too was spent. Terrorism, together with a series of campaigns on behalf of political prisoners, came in good time to help fill the void. It is important not to misinterpret the symbiosis of *lerrouxismo* and terrorism in this period. There is no evidence that the republicans contributed directly to terrorism in the streets — even in the cases of attempted “tyrannicides” we have seen that their position was rather that of taking advantage of them if successful, than having any direct part in them. But they were well aware that all terrorism contained a risk that the police might resort to similar methods.⁸⁵ They took it upon themselves to make this very awkward for the police. On the other hand, while putting a check on unwarranted and arbitrary harassment from the police, Lerroux and his followers, perhaps inevitably, made law-enforcement and the fight against real “social” crime almost impossible, and risky at the best of times. Having acquired its strength in the fight against corruption and injustice, the republican movement soon had a vested interest in public scandals and in magnifying the importance of the bombs. According to the republican press, there was never enough evidence to justify a conviction; no case of social delinquency could ever be proved to their satisfaction. Judges and juries had to reckon with hostile demonstrations and slander campaigns if they found an alleged terrorist guilty. And though this may have saved many an innocent anarchist from undeserved persecution, it also gave real terrorists the certainty of impunity. They could feel fairly sure unless they were caught red-handed, that they would go scot-free. Among republicans it became a kind of refrain that the bombs were the work of the priests,

⁸⁵ The radicals were justified in feeling apprehensive about the temper of the police and of Inspector Tressols in particular: see Ossorio to La Cierva — “Tressols . . . tells me that if he could do now what he was able to do in the past (a reference to the police methods of the 1890's), he would find out everything in a few hours, but I think these are things which cannot be repeated . . .”, cable, 3 Jan. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid).

the rich, the police and of their own political enemies; they organized mass-meetings and demonstrations in protest against the bombs and against "Mr. Arrow's police", and they called upon the people to organize themselves to fight the terrorists.⁸⁶ The situation in May 1906 was such, that Tomás Herreros could write the following letter to Federico Urales:

"Through the press you will have heard of the meeting held by the League for the Defence of the Rights of Man on Sunday. In that meeting we accused, with documentary evidence, the main authorities of Barcelona of being accomplices in the mystery of the explosions and in the discovery of bombs, and in our present mood it is essential that we go ahead, because public opinion is so much in our favour at the moment that, even if the police were to surprise an anarchist with a bomb in his hand, the people would say that the police themselves had held the bomb".⁸⁷

But it was in the year 1908 that the impact of terrorism on politics reached its highest peak, with Maura's Bill on the Repression of Terrorism. There was something almost inevitable about the process by which a few intermittent bomb outrages compelled Maura to take the grave step of turning the problem of terrorism into a legislative issue. Before we go into details, it should be pointed out that the Bill, with its wide range of repressive measures, was exclusively intended to wipe out terrorism and was in no way part of a planned attack on republicans, anarchists or working-class organizations: "It would be useful" wrote La Cierva to Ossorio soon after he entered the Cabinet,

if you could somehow and discreetly let the anarchists know that the government is prepared to treat them with absolute fairness as long as we are dealing with *ideas*; but that I, I personally (you understand?) am determined not to permit that they go on being a continual threat to Spanish society, and as soon as there is a repetition of terrorist acts, *I shall be quite inflexible* and take all necessary steps to rid Spain of this plague".⁸⁸

The reason for the importance of terrorism in politics at this time must be sought in the curious relationship between the dynastic

⁸⁶ For Republican accusations to the priests, police, etc. see: *La Campana de Gracia* (Republican Barcelona), 22 Nov. 1904; *La Publicidad*, 5 and 9 Sept. 1905; *El Progreso*, 31 Jan., 17 Feb., 10 Apr., 24 Dec. 1907, 1 Jan., 16 Mar., 24 May 1908, 30 June, 1 July 1909. Lerroux expressed the same point of view in Parliament, *Diario de Sesiones, Congreso*, 31 Dec. 1906, and so did Sol y Ortega and Azzatti — see *El Progreso*, 24 Apr. 1908 and 17 Apr. 1909. For protests, demonstrations, etc. see e.g. *La Publicidad*, 19 Nov. 1904, 12 Apr. and 12 Aug. 1907. On 11 Aug. 1907, at a protest meeting against Arrow's police, a republican worker was shot dead. The republicans accused the anarchist S. Seguí, who was tried and acquitted.

⁸⁷ Herreros, Barcelona, 14 May 1906 (police copy; Romanones papers, Madrid), xviii, 16.

⁸⁸ La Cierva to Ossorio (copy), Madrid, 13 Mar. 1907 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

governments and parties on the one hand and public opinion on the other. In the years following 1898, the basic political structure which provided any government with a secure majority through the *caciques* who controlled the rural areas and the many small towns, was still intact. Governments had no need of an electorate. But they did, by now, need the support and the trust which, under different political conditions an election victory would have provided. Of course, this had always been the case to a certain extent. But the need became more urgent because of the pressing problems brought on by the disastrous end of the Cuban War, the natural evolution of Spanish society, and also the fact that the dynastic politicians had to harness the energies generated by increasing political mobilization if they wished to prevent all of urban Spain from becoming more and more estranged from the monarchy. The different ways in which the two dynastic parties saw and tried to tackle this problem were reflected above all in their respective attitudes to the question of public order.

The liberals saw the solution in terms of attracting the support of a sector of society roughly corresponding to the working masses and the urban lower middle class. But since they could not risk losing the support of the *bosses* in the countryside, who alone could provide the parliamentary majority without which they could not govern, they were not in a position to formulate a *programme* which satisfied left-wing opinion. They therefore had to live with the knowledge that the Left would remain outside the monarchist camp, but had nonetheless to court it assiduously in the hope of gaining its good will. With regard to public order, this meant that as soon as there was any trouble the liberals resorted to a preventive suspension of constitutional guarantees, coupled with a policy of leniency in their dealings. "When the liberals are in power", said Lerroux, "there is less bloodshed".⁸⁹ For the liberal party, it was definitely cheaper to bribe than to coerce. That is why terrorism in Barcelona did not become a major political issue while the liberals were in power; the Moret

⁸⁹ From 1900 to July 1909, constitutional guarantees were suspended in Barcelona as follows: 1 Dec. 1900-9 Mar. 1901 (Silvela government, Conservative, up to 7 Mar. 1901); 7-14 May 1901 (Sagasta government); 19 Feb. 1902-29 Jan. 1903 (*id.* up to 6 Dec. 1902); 29 Sept. 1905-15 Apr. 1906 (Montero Rios and Moret governments); 2 Jan.-2 June 1908 (Maura government). The argument of the reckless leniency of the liberals was constantly hammered by Maura. While Lerroux's statement was probably untrue as far as countryside uprisings were concerned, it was definitely true for urban unrest. The conservative tough line, however, must not be exaggerated. Thus, of the eighty-odd trials for incitement to rebellion, verbal attacks (insults) on the Crown officials or disrespect to the authorities of the period between January 1907 and July 1909, those who were not absolved came under amnesty: more data in Romanones papers, lx, 27.

Government (Dec. 1905-July 1906) made a half-hearted attempt to reorganize the police, but did not show much concern: the bombs were not in themselves particularly destructive, and in local politics it was more important for the liberals to keep the republicans quiet than to be praised by the regionalists, their declared enemies.

The conservatives took a different view. Their party was able to set out a programme that would not antagonize their own rural bosses — on whose support they had to rely as much as the liberals did on theirs — and which appealed to the relatively weak parties on the right wing of the monarchy, or at least to many individual members of such groups. It was also in a position to make a bid for the support of the church and of the catholics. Silvela and Maura also set their sights on attracting, if not absorbing, the conservative wing of the Catalan regionalist movement — the *Lliga Regionalista*. By 1907, the *Lliga* had all but achieved the extinction of the conservative party in Catalonia, while maintaining a posture of indifference towards the question of whether the system of government should be monarchical or not. Though at first Maura tried to revive the conservative party Catalonia, he soon realized that this was impossible. If his attempt to bring all the rich, the conservative minded, the “permanent interests” into the dynastic fold was not to fail precisely in that part of Spain where these elements were strongest and best organized, he had to persuade the *Lliga* and regionalist opinion to co-operate with him. And the conservative government had no other resources in Catalonia than whatever influence and goodwill its actions could win for it in the minds of the regionalists. Thus, Maura had to formulate a programme that would meet the basic regionalist demands and prove that he had every intention of putting it into practice. He managed to do this by means of his Local Administration Bill, which he put before the Cortes in 1907.

But at the same time he had to show the regionalists that when the conservatives were in power it was safe to walk in the streets of Barcelona. The elimination of terrorism was essential to the success of his policies, since the previous years had shown that the regionalists were more easily manageable when they felt securely in charge of their own affairs. Local pressures, such as the republican hegemony in municipal administration or terrorism in the streets, made the home-rulers more radical and deaf to suggestions from Madrid.⁹⁰

Yet tranquility and order could not be purchased at just any price. Both common prudence and the conscience of the conservative-

⁹⁰ This summary interpretation of the respective situations of the dynastic parties, and of Maura's policy towards the Catalan home-rulers, will be treated in greater detail in my thesis cited above in note 48.

minded spoke against ruthless and immoderate repression. M. Moreno, Governor of Gerona, commented on the latest bomb outrages in Barcelona in a letter to Maura of 17 March 1908 as follows: "they are trying to make you lose your serenity and incite you to violent repression . . . Allow me to entreat you to remain . . . calm". Maura scribbled the essence of his reply in the margin: "Thanks, and not to worry".⁹¹

On the other hand, the suspension of constitutional guarantees, and even more the declaration of a stage of siege, were confessions of impotence, admissions that the government found itself unable to cope with a given situation in the normal way. Such measures weakened the prestige of the established institutions and were excessive in that they affected aspects of public life and people quite unconnected with the original cause and aim, namely terrorism and its suppression. Unless civil liberties were clearly defined and maintained, freely enjoyed by the individual citizen rather than conceded by virtue of "the tolerance of the Executive", people would lose faith not only in the judiciary but in government itself. Extreme measures such as the suspension of guarantees had therefore, in the conservative view, to be reserved for extreme circumstances and should not be invoked at the slightest provocation.⁹²

The first and most obvious step towards a solution of the terrorist problem was that of strengthening the police force in Barcelona — at that time a city of more than half a million inhabitants, which covered an area three times that of Madrid, and the centre of which was old, dark and derelict, with some two hundred streets less than ten feet wide, and as many again from ten to twenty feet.⁹³ The police force of this city consisted 1904-6 of 160 constables and nine inspectors. Since they worked in shifts, there were never more than eighty constables and four inspectors on duty at any one time.⁹⁴ As a result

⁹¹ Maura papers, Madrid: Ossorio explained his reserve regarding the anarchist workers' organization as follows: "I dare not proceed against these organizations, firstly because I see no way of doing so in accordance with the law; secondly because it seems to me dangerous for the government to act outside the law" — letter to La Cierva, 15 July 1907 (Ossorio papers, Madrid).

⁹² For the conservative arguments against the suspension of guarantees, see Maura — *Diario de Sesiones, Congreso*, 28 Nov. 1905, 14 and 15 Feb. 1908. Ossorio accepted the post of Governor in 1907 on the condition that he would resign if ever a state of siege was proclaimed in Barcelona: see Ossorio, 26 July 1909 (Maura papers).

⁹³ *Anuario Estadístico de la Ciudad de Barcelona 1902* (Barcelona, 1903), i, pp. 86-91.

⁹⁴ C. Gonzalez Rothwoss to Maura, 19 Sept. 1904 (Maura papers, Madrid). The police budget for Barcelona was 227,000 pesetas, as compared with 1,727,060 pesetas for the Madrid force of 1,453 men. Two years later, the duke of Bivona still gives the same number of 160 constables; the busy harbour was looked after by only 4 constables and one inspector: Bivona to Romanones, 23 Feb. 1906 (Romanones papers, Madrid), xii, 29.

of the constant pleas of Ossorio, the number of constables was raised to 400 in 1907, 540 in 1908 and 800 in April 1909 — still a far cry from the “thousands” called for by him.⁹⁵

It was even more important to improve the police force than to expand it. Throughout 1906, the Moret Cabinet made an effort in this direction. Moret's Civil Governor in Barcelona, the duke of Bivona, repeatedly asked for better salaries for the police (— which was in Barcelona less well paid than the municipal guard), and for its reorganization. In March 1906 came the new regulations for the police of Barcelona and Gerona. But the Prime Minister's attention was diverted to the more urgent problems of army unrest, and Bivona did not co-operate with him to the full. The Minister of the Interior, Count Romanones, a personal friend and usually a close collaborator of Bivona's, this time made the new appointments without consulting the Governor. Bivona was dismayed, and the police reform was brought to a standstill.⁹⁶ It was Maura's Minister of the Interior, the able Juan de la Cierva, who was to lay the foundations of the new police force, effectively assisted in Barcelona by the Governor, Ossorio y Gallardo.

Ossorio arrived in Barcelona on 30 January 1907. The next day he told La Cierva:

I have failed to find in the police force as many scandals as I had been led to believe. At present it is mainly comprised of poor devils who do not know what they are about rather than of villains. If blind justice were to be carried out, the whole lot should be sacked . . . Strong measures should soon be taken.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ossorio to La Cierva, 27 July 1907 (Ossorio papers, Madrid); cable id. to id., 1 Jan. 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid). There were 500 to 600 suspects to be watched: Ossorio to La Cierva, cable, 11 Dec. 1907 (Ossorio papers, Madrid). *El Diluvio* (Republican, Barcelona), 12 Apr. 1909, and H. Giner de los Ríos (Radical) in *Diario de Sesiones, Congreso*, 14 Apr. 1909, said that the Governor had 7,224 men. But this figure included night-watchmen, auxiliaries, *et al.* Apart from the security police, there were 1,600 Civil Guards for the whole province, who could be called in to quell street disorders. But that did not solve the more immediate problem of detection. The Governor found it so difficult to tighten police surveillance that he detailed civilians, hoping to enter the force, to guard duty, paying them 2 pesetas per day: Ossorio to La Cierva, 24 Dec. 1907 (Maura papers, Madrid).

⁹⁶ The new regulations for the police of Barcelona and Gerona, 22 Mar. 1906. The Royal Decree sanctioning the regulations, 9 May 1906. For police salaries and the Governor's complaints, Bivona to Romanones, 23 Feb., 7 Mar. 1906, Romanones papers, Madrid, xii, 29, 24; see also the collective complaint from police officers to Ossorio, Barcelona, 12 June 1907 (La Cierva papers, Murcia). For the disagreement between Moret and Bivona, who opposed fixity of tenure and the direct dependence of police constables and NCOs on their superiors for promotion, see Bivona to Romanones, *ibid.*, and Moret to Bivona (copy), n.d. (inclosure in letter from Romanones to Bivona, 15 Mar. 1906), *loc. cit.* The Governor's despair when confronted with the new nominations, among which there were some policemen who were actually in gaol, Bivona to Romanones, 9 Apr. 1906, *loc. cit.*

⁹⁷ Ossorio to La Cierva, 31 Jan. 1907 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

Ossorio applied himself to the task with the utmost care: he went as far as asking La Cierva to transfer away from Barcelona a certain police inspector who had gone to school with him because, "it is always dangerous for a governor to have an inspector who would treat him with familiarity".⁹⁸

But the task of transforming a corrupt, demoralized police force in a matter of months and of disentangling it from an almost inextricable net of informers and parallel organizations, was not an easy one. For there was not only Arrow's police force; a number of other people and institutions had their own secret agents in Barcelona at that time: the Paris *Préfecture* maintained a French police inspector, M. Bonnet-carrère, to report back on anarchist activities and to inform the French Consulate; a certain Colonel Morera employed a number of agents on behalf of the Queen Mother, who had long been obsessed by the terrorist threats to the King's life; the President of the High Court, Buenaventura Muñoz, the judge appointed to deal with terrorism, the Civil Guard and others, all had their own informers. As political tension grew after 1906, the political parties themselves and the Governor started employing informers who would infiltrate the various political groups and report what was going on inside them.⁹⁹

Ossorio infiltrated Arrow's O.I.C., Colonel Morera blackmailed one of Ossorio's agents, Arrow managed to get copies of the Governor's secret files on anarchism, while chief inspector Antonio Tressols complained that the O.I.C. deprived him of one of his most spectacular arrests by stepping in first. Many informers worked for more than one employer, unbeknown to those who paid them, or were blackmailed into double-dealing; some of them, like Juan Rull or Navarro Selma, further complicated the picture with their personal hatreds and preferences.¹⁰⁰

If the Government was worried about the trustworthiness of informers, it was even more concerned about that of the police itself.

⁹⁸ Ossorio to La Cierva, 4 May 1907, *loc. cit.*

⁹⁹ Bonnet-carrère, 10 Aug. 1905, *Arch. Nat.*, F⁷12513; Ossorio to La Cierva, 28 Mar. and 23 June 1907 (Ossorio papers, Madrid); N. Verdager y Callís to Prat de la Riba, Canet, 23 Aug. 1907 (reproduced in R. Olivar Bertrand, *Prat de la Riba* (Barcelona, 1964), p. 322.

¹⁰⁰ Ossorio's penetration of the O.I.C., in Ossorio to La Cierva, 26 Sept. and 29 Dec. 1907 (Ossorio papers, Madrid); Arrow's spies and the Governor's secret files, in Ossorio to La Cierva, 28 Feb. 1909 (La Cierva papers, Murcia); Tressols's complaints against the O.I.C., in Tressols to Millán Astray, Barcelona, 24 Aug. 1908, (copy), *loc. cit.* Rull was prepared to inform Ossorio, but only "on condition that inspector Tressols should be kept in the dark": A. Tressols. *Memoria* of 28 Feb. 1907 (Romanones papers, Madrid). Terrorist Navarro Selma gave information for money to Ossorio's agents only because he thought they were the king's or Maura's: "he hates me", says Ossorio, letter to La Cierva, 10 Feb. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

The republican allegations of police provocation had had an embarrassing ring of truth, at least since a certain captain Morales, of the Civil Guard, had in 1903 been so eager to impress his superiors with his effectiveness as the scourge of the terrorists, that he himself organized a spectacular conspiracy with bombs and all in Tarragona, in order to discover and foil it.¹⁰¹ As late as 1907, Ossorio reported that chief inspector Tressols was "going crazy", because a corporal of the municipal guard was fabricating a plot to show that Tressols himself was the author of the bomb outrages. The accusation was dismissed by the Civil Governor, but he himself started worrying when, a year later, he had to antagonize Tressols: "When you get on the wrong side of him, I think he is capable of anything, and I am sure he will try to do me some serious mischief".¹⁰²

Ossorio had the full support of La Cierva in his task. Royal decrees and ministerial orders flowed from the Ministry of the Interior: salaries were increased, fixity of tenure guaranteed, the records of all police officers were checked, anyone wishing to become a detective had to pass an examination, and a head office of the Barcelona police was formally established in 1908 — so that the Governor could at least partly be relieved of his tasks as provincial chief of police, thus making prompt actions possible. Ossorio carried out the reform with tireless energy but the results were slow in coming. "With a big stick waved at it", he wrote in December 1907, "the police are making some progress, but it still has no idea of its proper function They do their duty sparingly, have no urge to find out anything, and spend most of the day tearing each other apart".¹⁰³

The state of affairs in the Northern District of Barcelona was probably typical. In 1907 this district had a police chief who had been compromised in some unorthodox activities; its secretary preferred to resign rather than meet the Governor's demands; the constables were "old, illiterate and indolent". Ossorio sacked most of them; the others he disciplined with an iron hand: "I have reached the point where I have punished all the personnel". Then he filled the vacant posts with the newly recruited constables, "educated, polite, and well disposed". The secretariat was reorganized, and in

¹⁰¹ The plot was discovered thanks to the radicals: see Lerroux, *Memorias*, pp. 390, 646-7. Morales was expelled from the Civil Guard.

¹⁰² Plot against Tressols, in Ossorio to La Cierva, 26 Sept. 1907 (Ossorio papers, Madrid). The Governor's apprehensions in Ossorio to La Cierva, 8 Sept. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

¹⁰³ Ossorio to La Cierva, 27 Dec. 1907 (Ossorio papers), and to Maura, 11 June 1907 (Maura papers).

February 1909 Ossorio was rather satisfied with the results in the district.¹⁰⁴

The most persistent obstacles in the way of a modernization of the police force were the older and corrupt inspectors, like Tressols or Antonio Ramírez, *alias Memento*. These men were the pillars of the old police. Tressols, *alias Vinagret*, had been a rubbish collector before starting as a police informer. He had made a considerable fortune by blackmailing criminals. He was illiterate. When the new police regulations were brought into force, there was acute embarrassment as to what should be done with Tressols. Ossorio obtained La Cierva's agreement that he should be upgraded to chief inspector and that he would be exempt from any examinations. But that did not soothe him. The new ways of police action affected his pride:

He laughs at chiefs who are worthy magistrates while he himself has come up from the depths of the security corps, relying only on his truncheon; he scoffs at schools for he has had no need to know how to read . . . His wounded personal pride is making his life a misery.

Tressols, like his fellow-inspector *Memento*, turned against Ossorio. The radical press exploited their exhibitionism, and turned them into persecuted heroes. Tressols himself was in no small part responsible for keeping alive the myth about "higher protection" granted to terrorists and about the supposed unwillingness of the government to reveal or find the true culprits.¹⁰⁵

The governor's efforts proved worthwhile from more than one angle: petty crime dwindled, the *Solidario* Defence Commission of January 1907 was buried in March 1909, Arrow was dismissed well before his three-year contract was due to expire, representatives of the

¹⁰⁴ "Inspection of the police section of the Northern district on 21 Feb. 1909", inclosure in Ossorio to Cierva, 25 Feb. 1909 (La Cierva papers, Murcia). "In the last year", wrote Bonnacarrère in March 1908, the Barcelona police "has made surprising progress" (20 Mar. 1908, *Arch. Nat.*, F¹12725). For police organization and progress, see also: "Memorandum regarding the Spanish Police communicated confidentially by the Spanish Government", 23 Jan. 1909, Pub. Rec. Off., F.O. 371/741; *Gaceta de Madrid*, 8 Mar. 1908; F. D. Hill (U.S. Consul in Barcelona), "Spain, education and improvement of police force", *U.S.A. Monthly Consular Reports* (Washington), No. 343, Apr. 1909, pp. 221-2.

¹⁰⁵ "The case of Tressols is typical. He is the last living representative of a dying organization. I say this because he towers above the others, the residues that we have not yet been able to throw down the drain", La Cierva to Ossorio, 8 Sept. 1908 (copy; La Cierva papers, Murcia). Both Tressols and Memento were eventually dismissed by Ossorio. For Ossorio's problems with Tressols, see Ossorio to La Cierva, 8 Sept. 1908; La Cierva to Ossorio, 2 Apr. and 21 Aug. 1908, *loc. cit.*; Memento's explanations to the Inspector General of the Barcelona police, in: "Acta de la Jefatura Superior" (copy), 3 Jan. 1908; and Francisco Muñoz's (Inspector General) account of 8 Jan. 1908, *loc. cit.*

local bodies visited the new police headquarters and warmly congratulated Ossorio on the way he was doing his work. The prestige of civilian authorities rose.¹⁰⁶ But the improvement of the police still lagged behind the increasing activity of the terrorists. Police methods were still far too primitive, and the new men much too untrained and amateurish. There were too few policemen to make the streets safe.¹⁰⁷ The very process which decimated the numbers of hard-core terrorists within the anarchist movement had the effect of making it ever more difficult to obtain information about the tiny, closed group of propagandists-by-the-deed. There seemed to be no way of preventing a handful of determined men from placing bombs in the dark corners of deserted streets with impunity. No doubt, the reorganization of the police and the Government's determined stand helped to allay many fears, but, as we have seen, actual fear of the bombs accounted for little among the causes which made terrorism a political issue damaging for the government.

La Cierva and his Governor expected that the courts and the magistrates would largely make up for the deficiencies of the police.

¹⁰⁶ Indications of a drop in common crime: Ossorio to La Cierva, 9 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers); the dissolution of the *Comisión de Defensa*, in Ossorio to La Cierva, 16 Mar. 1909 (La Cierva papers); Prat de la Riba's letter to Arrow dismissing him, Barcelona, 20 Aug. 1909, Pub. Rec. Off., F.O. 371/743; Arrow's letters to Mr. Maycock, Vernet-les-Bains, 29 Aug. and 8 Sept. 1909, *loc. cit.*; Ossorio's letter of invitation to local bodies to visit the police headquarters, "so that the gap between the public and the police might be further reduced, and so that the former might be better informed about our work than by stupid press reports", in Ossorio to La Cierva, 24 Jan. 1909 and inclosure (La Cierva papers); congratulating letters from the Chamber of Commerce (6 Feb. 1909) and the Employers' Association (*Fomento del Trabajo Nacional*, 11 Feb. 1909) to Ossorio, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁷ M. Bonnacarrère complained that the police were incapable of keeping watch on the anarchist centres, instead of which they closed them down prematurely, before they could gather sufficient evidence against them, 20 Mar. 1908, *Arch. Nat.*, F'12725. There are many examples of amateurish methods being employed by eager young policemen, particularly one involving a certain Inspector Bravo-Portillo ("executed" in September 1919 by anarchists for heading the private terrorist police newly formed by Barcelona employers), who had at the time but recently joined the force after obtaining a Law degree, when he was made a laughing-stock by a group of idle women, who exploited his belief in the power of hypnotism as a means to discover terrorist secrets for their own amusement. For this episode, see Bravo's testimonial of 23 Apr. 1909; Ossorio to La Cierva, 21 and 23 Apr. 1909; F. Muñoz's final report to Ossorio, 9 May 1909 (La Cierva papers, Murcia). Ossorio himself never believed in these methods, but most of his policemen were enthusiastic about them. The limited number of constables actually on duty at any given moment remained no doubt a source of police inefficiency; thus, in the Northern District of Barcelona, with a working class population of 90,000 inhabitants, there were never more than 15 constables and 3 NCOs on duty, to cover an area of 28 square kilometres (Ossorio to La Cierva, 25 Feb. 1909, *loc. cit.*).

They were proved wrong, because they found the judiciary reluctant to co-operate with them. The reasons for this were many, as we shall see.

When the bombs started in 1904, and it became obvious to the Maura Government (Dec. 1903-Dec. 1904) that they would continue exploding unless something was done, Minister of Justice J. Sánchez Toca appointed his friend Felipe Pozzi, to the post of chief prosecutor at the Barcelona High Court. Ironically, this appointment was to help Maura's successor and chief rival within the conservative party, R. Fernández Villaverde, to keep the terrorist issue within reasonable bounds during his period as Prime Minister (January-June 1905).

When he arrived in Barcelona, in January 1905, Pozzi found the machine of Justice "rusty", almost "non-existent". There was not even a telephone at the High Court. As a sign of determination, Pozzi paid for it out of his own pocket. "The fear of anarchism, which was general, . . . impeded the functioning of the law". Pozzi was closely assisted by Captain General Delgado and by González Rothwoss (who stayed as conservative governor under the Azcárraga and Villaverde Governments). When suspected terrorists had been gaoled after the Bellas-Artes meeting of March 1905, Pozzi went to Madrid to explain his dilemma to Villaverde: either the terrorists were released for lack of evidence, or they were kept under arrest for a time; in any case, there was not enough evidence to bring them to trial. The Prime Minister said they should stay in prison, and Pozzi kept them there in spite of threats against his life. But a slander campaign soon followed; Lerroux, the republican *El Diluvio*, and the anarchists accused Pozzi himself of terrorist activities, and when the conservatives fell from office, the chief prosecutor, fearing that he would lack the "moral backing of the Government . . . the only backing we ever had", asked to be transferred and left for Seville.¹⁰⁸

The liberals could not find any prosecutor of Pozzi's mettle. The reluctance of magistrates to issue detention orders against suspected terrorists arose frequently from their justified opinion that the evidence produced by the police was far from satisfactory. This was the case when, much to Bivona's annoyance, a magistrate refused to accept as relevant evidence the fact that the police had found at an anarchist's house a contraceptive of the same brand as one which was found in an unexploded bomb. But only fear, or inertia, can explain

¹⁰⁸ Pozzi's account, in his letter to La Cierva, Seville, 2 July 1907, La Cierva Papers, Murcia. For the slander campaign, see, e.g. T. Herreros, *Lerroux tal cual es* (Barcelona, 1907), p. 12-13.

the refusal to order the detention of a suspect on whom formulae for explosives were found, or the avowed intention to absolve a group of suspects from Sabadell even before their detention. Juries too showed themselves less than courageous in the few cases in which the terrorists were actually brought into court, as in the Rull trial for the bomb which exploded at the High Court, and in the trial of Picoret and his friends.¹⁰⁹

The situation was pretty much the same when Maura became Prime Minister again in January 1907. As soon as he arrived in Barcelona, Ossorio demanded of him that terrorist offences be tried without a jury — a request that was granted forthwith.¹¹⁰ But the judges and magistrates, “excellent gentlemen with whom we are absolutely defenceless”, did not share Ossorio’s crusading spirit. Again, there was the same pattern as in the preceding liberal period. On the one hand there was the pusillanimity of some magistrates who refused to do their duty: even at the trial of the provocateur Morales, held in August 1907, where opinion was solidly in favour of a conviction, the defendant would no doubt have been acquitted, had not a Supreme Court magistrate threatened to proceed against the court; even in the Rull case strong pressure from above was needed to obtain a conviction.¹¹¹ On the other hand, in most cases strict adherence to legality, personal scrupulousness and procedural routine combined to neutralize the severe warnings sent from above. And the very nature of terrorist trials was a handicap for the government: if it was always difficult to find witnesses who had any relevant information about the small, in-bred terrorist groups, it was even harder to find people prepared to co-operate as witnesses for the

¹⁰⁹ The sentence at the Picoret trial: “a shameful absolving sentence dictated by fear”, Pozzi to La Cierva, 2 July 1907; Bivona’s complaints, in his letter to Romanones, 23 Feb. 1906 (Romanones papers, Madrid). For the Sabadell episode, Ossorio to La Cierva, 12 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid).

¹¹⁰ Ossorio to La Cierva, cable, 5 Feb. 1907 (Maura papers, Madrid).

¹¹¹ For the Morales trial, see N. Rivas: “Events which occurred in Barcelona (Aug. and Sept. 1907). Terrorism” (manuscript notes), N. Rivas papers, 11-8911, Royal Academy of History, Madrid. As for Rull, before making the decision to arrest him, Ossorio wrote to La Cierva (23 June 1907) that if the government did not impose its will on the court and make sure that he was given at least an indefinite prison sentence, he was not prepared to arrest him. “I expect to receive instructions alone if we can rely on the tribunal, but Treasury support [to continue paying Rull] if we cannot count on tremendous judicial energy” (Ossorio papers, Madrid). Once Rull was under arrest, Ossorio continued calling on the government to put pressure on the less than enthusiastic judge: *id.* to *id.*, 5 July 1907, *loc. cit.* That Rull was finally convicted was due less to the efforts of Ossorio than to the fact that nationalists, anarchists and radicals supported the prosecution. Even so, on 21 Jan. 1908 (*loc. cit.*) Ossorio asked the government to give the judges yet another reminder.

prosecution; the tribunals, therefore, had to base convictions on circumstantial evidence, which many judges refused to do on grounds of legal fairness.

It should be made clear that it is not a question here of the simple and familiar dictatorial pattern of a government determined to use every means of repression, and faced with a relatively unco-operative judiciary. The picture is far subtler. The Maura government was a determined one, which intended to see things done. Yet it was sensitive to opinion, internal and external. It was also a group consisting of men who were, in varying degrees, men of principle.

... The Government is resolved, whatever the cost, that things shall not proceed in Barcelona at the dictates of these ferocious anarchists. I do not doubt that this energetic action can produce vengeance . . . ; but I cannot conceive how a ruler can be deterred by this notorious danger, because life is worth very little before the nightmare of not being able to comply with the strict obligation to combat with blood and fire, as should be necessary, within the law of course, those who constantly and brutally attack, not even those in power, but any poor individual who walks in the street . . .¹¹²

There were four different means of countering the effects of police inefficiency in the terrorist question. Torture was the first. Its use was never contemplated by the government nor by Ossorio, who himself opposed it when Tressols proposed to make use of it.¹¹³

Then, the government could exert pressure upon the courts. If the prosecutors were willing to prosecute, or the judges were prepared to keep suspects in gaol for a long time, the problem would be partly solved because the terrorists would see that, as in the times of Pozzi, life was not easy for them in Barcelona. This was an advantageous solution, probably the least costly of all in political terms. La Cierva tried to do just that, but the attempt failed — perhaps because Maura, unlike Villaverde in 1905, did not back his Minister of the Interior: it is almost certain that he was kept uninformed for fear that he would veto this encroachment on the independence of the courts. La Cierva's plans in April 1907 were simple: Ossorio would make a massive roundup of suspected terrorists, and they would be kept in prison by the court for a long time. On 9 April, Ossorio summoned to his office the President of the High Court and the chief prosecutor of Barcelona. Buenaventura Muñoz disagreed with La Cierva on the political cost of the operation: no-one who "knew the past" could think of keeping anarchists in gaol for months without strong evidence against them. But this was only a minor point. "I could not order any such things", said the High Court President, "even if there were

¹¹² La Cierva to Ossorio, 9 Jan. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

¹¹³ See above, note 85.

magistrates prepared to obey such orders; but anyhow, there are none". Of course he would gladly resign, he added, if the government found someone "who wants to try or can do better". The chief prosecutor, Enrique Díaz, thought also that, "no judge would issue warrants of arrest" without incriminating evidence; it was not the function of the courts to do the work of the police.¹¹⁴ La Cierva immediately dropped his plans and no further attempts seem to have been made to turn the courts into the main instrument of repression, although of course they were constantly encouraged to be severe.¹¹⁵

Faced with such a vicious circle, the government resorted to the suspension of constitutional guarantees in Barcelona on 2 January 1908. The Governor welcomed this measure, though he had not requested it, but warned that if it was to be temporary it might as well not have been taken: the scattered terrorists would return to Barcelona as soon as the restrictions were lifted, for

the sickness is chronic, and remedies must therefore be chronic also: I cannot hope to expel from Barcelona in a few days all the suspects without being seen to resort to the most arbitrary measures. What I need is time ¹¹⁶

The advantage of the suspension of constitutional guarantees was that it could be imposed by decree, thus avoiding, if not parliamentary discussion on the subject, at least the painful process of enacting new laws. But it was of necessity a temporary solution, and a fairly ineffective one at that: ineffective, because, while facilitating the search for evidence by giving the police a freer hand, it did not add in itself anything substantial to the means of repression which the government had already found to be insufficient. As might have been expected, the measure merely served to scare the odd terrorist into fleeing abroad.¹¹⁷ The negative side soon outbalanced the gains. The republican Left and the Liberals immediately started to campaign against the suspension of guarantees. When La Cierva asked Ossorio only a few days later whether he could lift the suspension, as he was thinking of doing, the Governor replied that it must remain in force.¹¹⁸ This, however, was contrary to all that Maura stood for, and could

¹¹⁴ B. Muñoz to the Marquess of Figueroa (Minister of Justice) Barcelona, 10 Apr. 1907, and E. Díaz to Javier Ugarte (Chief prosecutor of the Supreme Court), Barcelona, 10 Apr. 1907 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

¹¹⁵ The readiness with which La Cierva's plan of April 1907 was dropped is shown by the fact that J. Ugarte's reply to E. Díaz's letter of 10 Apr. 1907, in which he argued in favour of the case put forward by La Cierva, was never sent: the original, of 19 Apr. 1907 in La Cierva archive, Murcia.

¹¹⁶ Ossorio to La Cierva, 9 Jan. 1908 (Ossorio papers, Madrid).

¹¹⁷ The anarchist Cendra left for Buenos-Aires in February. "And he is not the only one", Ossorio to La Cierva, cable, 14 Feb. 1908 (La Cierva papers, Murcia).

¹¹⁸ La Cierva to Ossorio, 12 Jan. 1908 (La Cierva papers).

not go on for long. Ossorio, like the President and the chief prosecutor of the Barcelona High Court, and like many of the local conservatives, asked for a new law to be worked out, which would make the repression of terrorism easy, while not affecting other sectors of Spanish public life. On 12 January 1908, the Minister of the Interior told the Governor that he would bring the matter to the attention of the Cabinet and speak in its favour.¹¹⁹ The Cabinet was persuaded, and the Bill for the repression of terrorism was presented as soon as the Cortes reopened on 24 January 1908.

Because of a few bombs and because of police incompetence, the Government's unwillingness to make use of torture, the refusal of the Judiciary to accept and follow La Cierva's broad interpretation of the procedural code, and the political as well as practical disadvantages inherent in the suspension of constitutional guarantees all combined to oblige the Maura administration to pose the problem in legislative terms.

Of the two possible ways in which new legislation might have dealt with the problem of terrorism, the government chose the one which appeared most reasonable. There are a number of very good reasons why a reform of the penal or the procedural codes was not even contemplated: procedural laws are general by their nature and could not be changed in one of their aspects without affecting the rights of all accused, regardless of the offence; the alternative of creating a special court with special procedures to deal with terrorist crimes, was not one to appeal to liberal statesmen in pre-1914 Europe. And passing the matter over to be dealt with by military courts would have been a suicidal political move, especially after the incidents of November 1905, and the scandal aroused by the law of jurisdictions of 1906, which had made civilian offenders against the army liable to be tried by military tribunals. The penal code itself, on the other hand, did not require much reform in this connection. Had the government followed a later dictatorial fashion repulsive to the jurists of the time and created new and loosely defined legal categories of crime (known as "open types" in Continental Criminal Law), it would again have come up against the problem of an unco-operative judiciary which had so magnified the terrorist issue already.

The only reasonable alternative open to the government was therefore that of a Bill which would give it ample statutory powers to deal with the terrorists. Maura's Bill was meant to amend the law of

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*; the first indication from Ossorio that this sort of law was considered necessary, and that it was demanded by wide sectors of opinion goes back to 31 Jan. 1907 (cable to La Cierva, La Cierva papers, Murcia).

10 July 1894 covering bomb outrages, by adding an article which would enable the government to suppress by decree all anarchist centres and publications and close down all the meeting places of anarchists; also, to expel or deport from Spain all those who by word of mouth or in writing propagated anarchist ideas, and to imprison any anarchists who returned.

The government held this Bill to be a reasonable alternative to the kind of arbitrary police action and violent repression that would probably have put a stop to terrorism. It was, in Maura's words, a "minimal suspension of guarantees", in that it limited the impact to anarchist and terrorist groups only, while leaving the rights of all other citizens intact. The problems caused by an unco-operative judiciary were to be solved by putting the burden of repression into the hands of the executive.

Maura first submitted the Bill to the Senate in a conciliatory vein, apparently expecting it to be met with no more than token resistance from the liberal opposition. In fact, it aroused a mighty storm of protest.¹²⁰ And this was only natural. Maura's Bill was a product of the profound conservative belief that a law which cannot be enforced or has become obsolete, is a bad law which should be changed.¹²¹ But while any infringement of the existing law by the executive was the government's business, a change in the law required the co-operation in parliament of the opposition — which it was, in this instance, unable and unwilling to provide. The Bill was intended to make up for the poor quality of the police and the unreliability of the judiciary by giving the government a free hand. Neither the conditions in which the *preventive* measures would be applicable nor their limits were clearly specified. It left the government free to extend them at its discretion. It is not surprising therefore, that the opposition suspected the government of striving towards arbitrary rule.¹²²

The campaign against the Bill stirred up the whole of Spain. The liberals protested in the Senate that it was unconstitutional. Sol y Ortega, on behalf of the radicals, claimed that not only anarchist, but also any kind of liberal or radical propaganda would be made impossible.¹²³ Though the Senate eventually passed the Bill on

¹²⁰ "I simply cannot see why you get so angry! I cannot see why!", *Diario de Sesiones, Senado*, 6 Apr. 1908.

¹²¹ Maura, *Diario de Sesiones, Congreso*, 28 Apr. 1905.

¹²² The regionalist and ultra-conservative town councillor Pla y Daniel voted against the Bill saying that he feared it would leave the door open for Liberal injustice if it were passed: Ossorio to La Cierva, cable, 22 May 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid).

¹²³ See e.g. D.S.S., 4 Apr. (B. Dávila), 5 Apr. (Montero Rios), 10 Apr. (Sol y Ortega) and 22 Apr. (Rodríguez), 1908.

9 May 1908, the liberal and republican press and even conservative newspapers like *ABC* had by then joined forces under the leadership of Miguel Moya to present a united front in opposition to it, with the wholehearted support of two liberal ex-premiers, E. Montero Rios and General López Domínguez (3 May) and later on of S. Moret, J. Canalejas and G. Azcárate (11 May). When the lower house commission set up to study the Bill began its public enquiry on 13 May, the campaign had turned into a crusade. Pablo Iglesias, the socialist leader, declared on 19 May that "if we are not going to be allowed to function legally, . . . we ourselves will have to become terrorists". On 22 May, Joaquín Costa, though seriously ill, was persuaded to come out of his retirement in the Pyrennees declaiming that with such a law Spain would be no better than a colony of Guinea. In Catalonia the reaction was equally strong. The Barcelona city council voted unanimously against the Bill on 21 May. The left wing of *Solidaridad*, the radicals and anarchists organized public meetings throughout the region, denouncing the "abominable law" and "Maura the Dictator". The syndicalists even sent an envoy, Mariano Castellote, to appear before the parliamentary commission in Madrid. Emiliano Iglesias, too, travelled to Madrid on a similar mission on behalf of the radical party and its leader, Lerroux (who had gone abroad for a time to escape being brought to trial in connection with a newspaper article).¹²⁴

Once the commission had completed its enquiry, the opponents of the Bill organized a public meeting in the Princess Theatre, Madrid, which was attended by Pérez Galdós, Sol y Ortega, G. Azcárate, Melquiades Álvarez (republicans), Canalejas (liberal-democrat) and Segismundo Moret (leader of the liberal party). Under the circumstances, Maura had no choice but to give way. On 1 June he revoked the suspension of constitutional guarantees in Barcelona and the Bill was dropped even before the commission had had time to publish its conclusions. Bombs went on exploding in Barcelona, sometimes one a month, sometimes two, and the Governor had to

¹²⁴ These events were widely reported in the press. For a general view, see F. Soldevilla, *El año político 1908* (Madrid, 1909) *passim*. For Catalonia, see especially *El Progreso*, May 1908. For the anarchist campaign against the Bill, see *El Trabajo* (Anarchist, Sabadell), *Tierra y Libertad*, Apr.-June 1908, *passim*. Only the publication of the purists, *El Rebelde*, was hostile to the campaign, considering it *political* (see 13 June 1908). It seems that Castellote's trip was financed by Ortega Munilla, of the newspaper trust hostile to Maura: Ossorio to La Cierva, cable, 16 Jun. 1908. Apparently *Solidaridad Obrera* was planning a General Strike throughout Catalonia in protest against the Bill: *id.* to *id.*, cable, 19 May 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid).

face the fact that his problems with the terrorists, the police and the judiciary were there to stay.¹²⁵

But the Bill did have a negative effect for Maura — that of sapping the government's prestige. And the left-wing propagandists, whose charge that Maura was a total reactionary had always sounded rather hollow in view of the latter's strict adherence to legality (a political necessity for him as much as a matter of conviction), were now able to point to the anti-terrorism Bill in support of their accusations, even though the Bill itself was a reflection of this self-same respect for legality. If Maura failed in his attempt to push it through, it was not because his parliamentary party or his cabinet were split on the issue, or because he could no longer command a majority in the Cortes, but rather because Moret and his liberals had suddenly changed their attitude to the problem. Disturbed by the way in which the conservatives were managing to rally the support of all the right-wing elements in the country, the Liberal party grasped eagerly at the chance of cashing in on the upsurge of leftist public opinion; it seemed advisable to join a movement that already enjoyed the sympathy of the non-conservative press. Many of its members no doubt felt that in this instance expediency anyway coincided with their convictions. Thus it came about that at the Princess Theatre meeting, the leader of the Liberal party was for the first time seen standing side by side with the leaders of republicanism. In his address, Moret spoke of the need for a "grand confederation of ideas and a firmly cemented unity of determination . . . against the enemies of freedom".¹²⁶ In this way, the foundations were laid for a United Front of the Left, which Moret proclaimed in his Zaragoza speech of 18 November 1908; a united front which left the details of a programme for later and whose watchword was: "Remember what a formidable right-wing force we are facing!"¹²⁷

What followed is well known. The month of July 1909 brought the "Tragic Week" of Barcelona, sparked off by a wave of revolutionary protest against the dispatch of troops to Morocco. Once

¹²⁵ "The court clerk will ask him [Perelló] whether it is he who is responsible for the bombs, and when he says no they will let him go free": Ossorio to La Cierva, cable, 5 July 1908 (Maura papers, Madrid). By that time, Ossorio had given up asking for pressure to be put on the courts, because it had no effect on them: cable, id. to id., 6 July 1909, *loc. cit.* For pressure on the courts, in 1909, see La Cierva to Ossorio, cables, 7 Mar., 6 July 1909 (La Cierva papers, Murcia). On 16 Mar. and again on 19 Aug. 1908, increasingly worried about his failure to solve the problem of terrorism, Ossorio offered to resign (Ossorio and La Cierva papers).

¹²⁶ Soldevilla, *Año político 1908*, p. 190.

¹²⁷ Extract, *op. cit.*, pp. 406-18.

order had been restored, Maura and La Cierva, now a changed man, decided to let the suspension of constitutional guarantees continue *sine die*; they ordered the progressive, non-religious schools and the left-wing clubs and societies to be closed down and they banned the republican and anarchist press.¹²⁸ On 13 October 1909, Francisco Ferrer was executed — after having been tried by a military tribunal — as “author and chief of the July rebellion”. As a result, on 20 October, when Parliament had barely reopened, Moret made a speech in which he announced his refusal to collaborate henceforth in any way whatsoever with Maura, thus bringing the parliamentary system itself to a standstill and precipitating the fall of the conservative leader (25 October 1909), who vowed that his own attitude towards the Liberal party would be one of “implacable hostility” while it continued without a programme.

This crisis, which was to do the monarchy irreparable damage, was in no way fortuitous. The political history of the preceding years shows the Conservative and Liberal parties on a collision course that would lead them inevitably — or at least most probably — to a major conflict. But in the summer of 1909, as in 1908, it was government repression that made Moret a — willing or unwilling — prisoner of the United Front. While the Conservatives considered that they were punishing an anarchist by executing Ferrer, the Liberals felt that they were defending a free-thinking teacher. The government failed to see that the way in which they could show Ferrer to be a criminal rather than a martyr was by conducting his trial less hurriedly and in a civilian court. Maura and La Cierva were not prepared to make such a concession. And this was not because they themselves doubted his guilt but simply because they despised *vociferous* public opinion, “the rattle” as Maura called it contemptuously. Disregarded, the left became much more vociferous, until it brought about Maura’s downfall, by making the king fear for his throne.¹²⁹

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¹²⁸ There is almost no information in the sources about the various bombs that exploded in these months, and anyway they had no political importance.

¹²⁹ Years later, the king said to Maura’s son Gabriel, “I subscribed . . . to the movement against Maura . . . because I was convinced that I could not prevail against half of Spain and half of Europe as well”: G. Maura and M. Fernández Almagro, *Por qué cayó Alfonso XIII* (Madrid, 1948), p. 156.